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Metro named Newspaper of the Year

AWARD Metro International SA has just been named Newspaper of the Year at the Festival of Media Awards, in Valencia, Spain.

The awards celebrate innovation and creativity and are widely recognized as the largest celebration of media in the industry. Metro International won this prestigious title over internationally acclaimed publications including the Financial Times, the Wall Street Journal and The New York Times.

"Metro has been dedicated to inventing new and creative formats for advertisers for the past decade and on behalf of all our amazing staff I'm very, very proud to have been given this honour," said CEO Per Mikael Jensen.

The award, which is a new category this year, celebrates newspapers' heritage and honours the balance of "publishers and editors working in harmony."

SunnySide pg 4

Young fan gets Flames playoff seat

World pg 6

Stop nuclear work or else: U.S. to Iran

ShareYourViews
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Playoffs **Flames 6, Blackhawks 4**

TODD KOROL/REUTERS

Calgary Flames goalie Mikka Kiprusoff deflects the puck during the first period of Game 4 of their NHL Western Conference quarter-final hockey game against the Chicago Blackhawks in Calgary last night. The Flames won 6-4. Story, pg 11

'Tempest in a teapot'

Aldermen band together to block Memorial Drive closure

SHAWN LOGAN
for Metro Calgary

Opponents of a scheme to close down a portion of Memorial Drive during Sundays in August are demanding that the plan be debated publicly.

After receiving a deluge of angry calls and emails from Calgarians, a group of four aldermen have drafted a motion to scuttle plans to turn half of the busy thoroughfare into a pedestrian playground.

Ald. Joe Connelly, who yesterday submitted the motion that will come forward to the May 11 council meeting, said people are miffed over plans to close the south lanes of Memorial for four Sundays in August, which almost skirted past council's radar with no discussion.

"Maybe there is a middle ground and that's why we need to put this on the table and give people a chance to comment about this," he said.

"I think there are viable alternatives that exist so why would we inconvenience Calgarians?"

Hoping to mirror the success of other cities that have closed major riverside roadways on weekends, city staff and area Ald. Druh Farrell had been pushing the plan to close off Memorial Drive between 3 Street and 10 Street SW in hopes of attracting weekend revellers.

The inner city alderman said a compromise is now being cooked up by the nearby Hillhurst-Sunnyside Community Association to have the closure on only one Sunday to hold a public event.

But Farrell noted the degree to which some of her council colleagues have opposed the road closure has her wondering what the true motive is.

"The hyberbole is extraordinary — it's a tempest in a teapot," she said.

"We already close over 200 roads for events every year so what would be different about this one?"

Farrell noted full closures of 17 Avenue SW for Red Mile functions and 17 Avenue SE for GlobalFest are far more inconvenient, so closing half a roadway for one day during the slowest time of year shouldn't be a problem.

Bronco to push break for builders

SHAWN LOGAN
for Metro Calgary

Faced with a stagnant housing market, struggling developers deserve a break on infrastructure levies, Mayor Dave Bronconnier announced yesterday.

Speaking before a luncheon crowd of industry leaders, Bronconnier said he plans to ask council on Monday to scuttle a planned 12 per cent hike in development levies and grant a 12-month extension to developers to pay.

"If the city can do a little bit to help this industry, in this case freezing the fees, it should translate into some savings to the development industry, which should help new home buyers," he said.

The city is in the fourth year of a five-year agreement with developers that saw an average of $130,000 per hectare paid to the city in 2008 to cover roads, transit and other services.

That levy is slated to increase to around $144,000 per hectare this year, but would be frozen if Bronconnier gets his way.

Michael Flynn, executive director of the Urban Development Institute, said with the industry slumping, any assistance is helpful.

"It may not mean enormous financial gains for us but it will enable companies to take a step back and deal with the financial crisis," he said.

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Cop won't face charges
No criminal charges will be laid against a Calgary police officer who shot and killed a knife-wielding man last September, the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) announced yesterday. The deceased man's wife was found also dead inside the apartment after the incident. METRO CALGARY

Local

Cracking down on crime

Calgary police are giving the thumbs-up to a new piece of provincial legislation designed to crack down on gang violence in the city. Bill 42 would allow bars to collect, use and share information about problem bar patrons and allow police to remove gang members or associates from establishments. METRO CALGARY

Parks and Recreation
with Amy Poehler
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News in brief

RECYCLING The City of Calgary collected 150 tonnes of recycled material yesterday, enough to completely cover the Pengrowth Saddledome ice to a depth of two feet, according to city officials. Curbside recycling started in the southwest quadrant of Calgary yesterday, with a higher-than-expected participation rate and few logistical problems, officials said. METRO CALGARY

metronews.ca
What's online today.

Video Clean Calgary Association offers free service to make households more green at **metronews.ca/local**

Blog Hollywood Rants blasts Billy Bob Thornton's unapologetic appearance on Jimmy Kimmel

Lotteries
Lotto 6/49: 10, 12, 21, 38, 41 & 42 Bonus 28
These results are not official.

Students giving a hoot

Burrowing owl, contest help kids get excited about nature

ALYSSA JULIE
for Metro Calgary

Sara Al-Shaww came face to face with the burrowing owl at the Calgary Zoo yesterday during the launch event for a Canadian wildlife art and literature contest.

"It was pretty cool," said the 10-year-old, "I learned that they eat insects and grasshoppers and lots of cool stuff."

Al-Shaww was one of 33 Captain John Palliser students to meet a burrowing owl during the Earth Day launch for Robert Bateman's Get To Know contest. The contest encourages youth to learn about local wildlife and get involved in nature conservation.

Al-Shaww said it's the first time she's heard of the contest — now in its ninth year — but she said she's definitely going to take part this year.

Her teacher, Jeanette Toupin, said the contest is a great way to expose students to Canadian wildlife and encourage them to take an interest in their surroundings.

"It's just so important. This is the world of their future, they need to take care of it," said Toupin, who teaches Grades 4, 5 and 6. "It's about making responsible decisions concerning our impact on the earth."

Biodiversity is the theme for this year's contest, which is open to Canadian youth aged 19 and under. Winners will have their work published in the 2010 Robert Bateman Get To Know Calendar. The contest closes May 27.

ROBIN KUNISKI/FOR METRO CALGARY

Tanya Hope, natural history interpreter, holds Athena, a burrowing owl, for students from Captain John Palliser who got a lesson in conservation yesterday at the Calgary Zoo as part of Earth Day.

Alleged extortion scheme busted

ARRESTS Authorities believe there are more victims of an alleged violent extortion scheme that has resulted in numerous charges against four people.

Alberta Integrated Response to Crime South Insp. Bob Simmonds said the investigation, dubbed INDEBT, targeted a Calgary-and-area-based criminal organization that allegedly extorts money and uses violence to attain money.

"This particular group is more traditional in their organized criminal behaviours," Simmonds said, adding that the group "targets victims who are often in dire financial straits and offers a loan." The threats of harm to victims and their families are what concern police.

Facing criminal charges are Luciano Ferrazzano, Antonio Chiocchio, Michael George Carter, Mark Leblanc and Paulo Flores. Flores has not been located and police are searching for him. KRISTA SYLVESTER/ METRO CALGARY

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Missing woman found safe

A missing Calgary woman who functions at the level of a six-year-old has been found safe in the Maritimes. Kaitlynn Mackinnon went missing from her northwest home April 12, but was found yesterday with family. METRO CALGARY

Man sought in Plus 15 sex assault

SUSPECT Calgary police are looking for a sex assault suspect after a woman was grabbed by a man, pushed against the wall and groped while walking in a Plus 15 system along 4 Street and 4 Avenue SW last Friday around 6:30 p.m. The suspect is described as between 25 and 35 years old, about five-foot-nine, with a medium build and a round face with multiple moles.

$2B urged for green jobs: Report

RECESSION Alberta's government needs to spend billions to create hundreds of thousands of green jobs in order to dig the province out of the global recession, urged the Alberta Federation of Labour and two environmental groups during Earth Day yesterday.

And if the Tory government spends the $2 billion now, 14,000 jobs can be created over the next two years, said a released report commissioned by AFL, Greenpeace and the Sierra Club. METRO CALGARY

She paints ... she scores!

SunnySide

KRISTA SYLVESTER
krista.sylvester@metronews.ca

She called it "the chance of a lifetime" when she found out she was hand-picked by the Calgary Flames to attend their playoff game last night.

And 13-year-old Flames fan Mikayla Kardynal made sure to bring the Flames poster she painted with red, yellow and orange water colours that helped her get the seats for the game.

"I was really surprised that they picked me to go to the game," she modestly said. "I was so excited. I have never been to a game before and I have always wanted to."

Kardynal brought her stepfather to the game and said she wants to attend more games in the future.

"I just like them a lot because I live in Calgary and they are a good team. I like Kipper," she added.

ROBIN KUNISKI/FOR METRO CALGARY

Mikayla Kardynal, 13, gets ready for the real thing as she won free tickets to last night's Flames playoff game for making the best Calgary Flames poster out of her class.

The tickets couldn't have been made possible without the help of Kids Up Front, a program that helps children get tickets to events they might not otherwise be able to get.

When the Flames saw the effort Kardynal put into her Flames poster, they gave the extra tickets for her to attend, Kids Up Front spokesperson Kari Scarlett said.

Kardynal's teacher Aaron Rudy said she deserved the tickets because she has never seen a game before.

"And this will probably make her an even bigger Flames fan for life now," he added. "It was really great of them to do that."

Students ban polystyrene from centre

MOUNT ROYAL In their quest for a greener campus, the Students' Association of Mount Royal College decided to ban Styrofoam products in the student centre.

"We pride ourselves on being leaders when it comes to the environment and we want to do our part, so this was a step towards creating a culture of sustainability," external VP Matt Koczkur said.

Not only are polystyrene products banned in the student centre, which includes their service centres and events, by Sept. 1, 2009 all food venues in Wyckham House will also have to find alternatives.

"I think they understand we want to be leaders and are excited about finding alternatives. There are many options out there to choose from," he said, adding plastic plates are a likely choice.

The move to ban polystyrene products was voted on unanimously by the students' association.

KRISTA SYLVESTER/METRO CALGARY

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Turkey recalls ambassador
Turkey has recalled its ambassador to Canada for consultation, said a Foreign Ministry source yesterday, after Prime Minister Stephen Harper spoke at a vigil to commemorate the 1915 killing of Armenians. REUTERS

Canada

Schreiber claim denied

The assertion by Karlheinz Schreiber, left, that Brian Mulroney wanted to keep secret his controversial $300,000 cash payment for lobbying was blown out of the water yesterday by one of Schreiber's own lawyers. Schreiber's Edmonton lawyer Robert Hladun told a public inquiry probing Mulroney's business relationship with Schreiber that Mulroney did no such thing.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

VANOC makes its case in court

OLYMPICS A lawsuit filed against VANOC by women ski jumpers who want to be included in the 2010 Games has put the organizing committee between a rock and a hard place, a lawyer for VANOC says. George MacIntosh, who presented his defence in B.C. Supreme Court yesterday, said VANOC shouldn't be held responsible for the IOC's decision to keep women's ski jumping out.
METRO CANADA

News in brief

G7 MEETING The Group of Seven leading industrialized nations will signal at a meeting in Washington this weekend that there are glimmers of economic hope but that the global economy is not out of the woods yet, a senior Canadian finance official said yesterday.
REUTERS

Poll Tories losing ground

BLAIR GABLE/REUTERS

Prime Minister Stephen Harper speaks yesterday during question period in the House of Commons on Parliament Hill. A new poll puts the Liberals at 32 per cent, the Conservatives at 29 per cent, the New Democrats at 16 per cent, the Greens at 11 per cent and the separatist Bloc Quebecois at nine per cent.

Canadian hostages freed

Diplomats, European tourists released by al Qaida

Two Canadian diplomats and two European tourists held hostage by al Qaida's north African wing in the Sahara desert have been released, a spokesman for Mali's president said yesterday.

Canadian Robert Fowler, a United Nations envoy to Niger, disappeared with his aide last December, while four tourists — two Swiss, a German and a Briton — were kidnapped on the Mali-Niger border in January.

"We confirm the release of four hostages," Seydou Cissouma, a spokesman for Mali's president, told Reuters. He said they were the Canadians and two female tourists.

The freed tourists are from Switzerland and Germany.

Statement

- Al Qaida's north African wing had said it was holding the four tourists, who were taken from Mali into the neighbouring Saharan state of Niger, as well as the two Canadians.

Earlier this month, a Malian security source said a team of mediators was negotiating the release of the European tourists.

Sources at the United Nations confirmed Fowler and his assistant, Louis Guay, were free.

In Ottawa, a relative of Fowler's, Member of Parliament Dominic LeBlanc, said his understanding was that Fowler was being taken by Malian authorities to the capital of Bamako, and his family hoped to meet him in Europe in a few days.

"Our information is Mr. Fowler is in the custody of the authorities of the government of Mali," LeBlanc said.

"They would insure his safety in order for him to get to Bamako, at which point Canadian officials will obviously provide the care ... and hopefully expedite him quickly to visit his family."

Analysts say the Sahara desert in West Africa has become increasingly insecure and the lines between ideology and criminality in the region are blurred.
REUTERS

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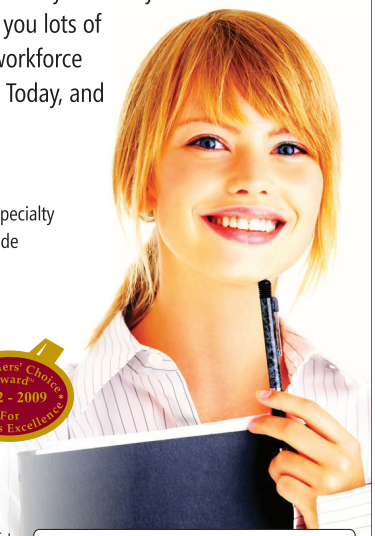

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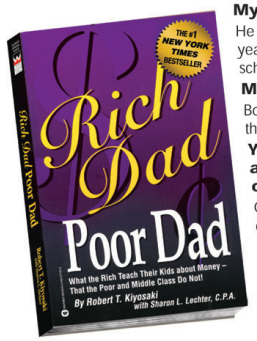

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French politician turns to Facebook to announce pregnancy
The French minister responsible for the country's digital economy, Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, announced yesterday that she was pregnant and used social networking site Facebook to do it. REUTERS

World

Third paternity claim for Lugo

A third woman in two weeks has claimed that Paraguay's bishop-turned-president Fernando Lugo fathered her child, intensifying a political scandal that has made him the butt of lewd jokes and even a pop song. Damiana Moran, a 39-year-old teacher, told local media that Lugo was the father of her one-year-old son and she was negotiating child support with the president's lawyer. REUTERS

U.S. threatens Iran sanctions

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton yesterday threatened sanctions against Iran if it did not end its nuclear program after Tehran offered talks with major powers.

Clinton told U.S. lawmakers she was under no illusions about the difficulty of engaging Iran.

"We are also laying the groundwork for the kind of very tough … crippling sanctions that might be necessary in the event that our offers are either rejected or the process is inconclusive or unsuccessful," Clinton told the House foreign affairs committee.

Clinton's tough talk came as Iran, in a statement, said it believed discussions could resolve disputes between the Islamic republic and the West, but it said Tehran would press ahead with its work to develop atomic energy.

The statement was a response to an invitation this month by six world powers to discuss the nuclear issue. Last week, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Iran had prepared proposals to end the dispute. REUTERS

N. Korea talks

- Clinton said yesterday that Washington wanted to resume six-nation nuclear talks with North Korea and urged the world to not "give in" to the North's "unpredictable behaviour."

Global climate deal riding on U.S. laws: Adviser

WASHINGTON U.S. President Barack Obama's top climate negotiator warned yesterday that international efforts to tackle global warming are doomed unless the U.S. enacts laws to limit emissions.

"There will be no new global deal if the United States is not part of it and we won't be part of it unless we are on track in enacting our own domestic plan," Todd Stern told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Countries from around the world are scheduled to meet in Copenhagen in December to try to embrace a new plan for attacking climate change problems.

Stern said the Obama administration will soon unveil proposals to be discussed in Copenhagen. REUTERS

LARRY DOWNING/REUTERS

U.S. President Barack Obama poses with workers at Trinity Structural Towers Manufacturing Plant, a wind energy production facility, during an Earth Day visit in Newton, Iowa yesterday.

Big progress in east Afghanistan: U.S. commander

KABUL U.S. and NATO forces are close to achieving "irreversible momentum" in battles with insurgents in eastern Afghanistan, a senior commander said yesterday.

The Taliban and other insurgent groups have been strongest in eastern and southern Afghanistan, but U.S. Army Maj.-Gen. Michael Tucker said security had improved this year in the east, where U.S. forces lead NATO troops.

He said about 80 per cent of insurgent activity now takes place in southern Afghanistan, where the U.S. plans to deploy thousands of troops in the coming months to reinforce Canadian, British, Dutch and other NATO soldiers. REUTERS

News in brief

LONDON British police yesterday denied making an embarrassing mistake after releasing all 12 men seized in raids to foil a suspected al Qaida plot that were brought forward due to a security breach. The men, 11 Pakistanis and one Briton, were arrested around northwest England April 8 as part of an operation against what Prime Minister Gordon Brown called at the time a "very big terrorist plot." REUTERS

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Comment & Views

Comment

The man and his music

Tunes go a long way in determining couple compatibility

Relating

Andrea Woo

metronews.ca/woo

"Men profess to be lovers of music, but for the most part they give no evidence in their opinions and lives that they have heard it." — Henry David Thoreau.

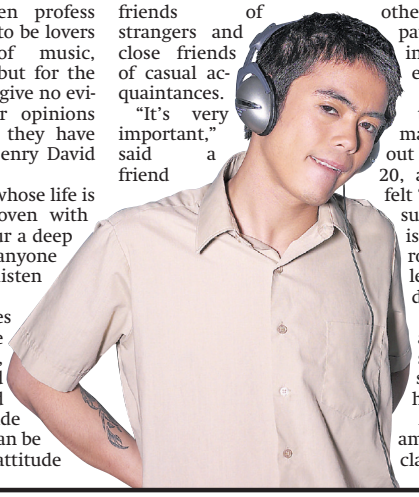
As someone whose life is inextricably woven with music, I harbour a deep suspicion for anyone who doesn't listen to much of it.

This carries over into the dating arena, where it could be well-argued a man's attitude toward music can be telling of his attitude toward romantic relationships.

Music, after all, is a marker of cultural identity. It can permeate every facet of life — work, friends, hobbies, appearance — and shape the people they become.

It can make fast friends of strangers and close friends of casual acquaintances.

"It's very important," said a friend and fellow audiophile of sharing similar musical tastes with a significant other. "It implies compatibility and common interests — possibly even social views."



One girlfriend tells me she dated a man until she found out he likes Matchbox 20, at which point she felt "meh." Another who suspects her boyfriend is gay was all furrowed brows upon learning he loves Lady Gaga.

Individual artists aside, a person's passion for music can speak volumes about his or her character.

A man who has amassed shelves of classic vinyl records, for example, has invested time, money and effort into something he is passionate about. A Top 40 fan, not so much.

Hipster doofuses who make grand efforts to find the most obscure music possible — "It's these two Icelandic dudes with oboes and rainsticks!" — are probably as pretentious in other areas of life.

It can also be deduced a hip-hop head won't likely be procreating with the fragile emo kid any time soon. Same goes for the classical jazz fan and the raver who tweaked through the '90s to ATB and Vengaboys.

That said, there is the occasional pairing of those who many would never expect to work, but do. They are the left-field collaborations, the seamless blends — the perfect mash-ups.

On the web

- For more views on relating, go to Love Bytes at metronews.ca/blogs

Andrea Woo is a Vancouver-based news and entertainment reporter. She won this column in a carnival dart game.

MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

Naiveté and international hypocrisy

Mona Eltahawy

Global View

"Morin's mother has threatened to sue the Canadian government for negligence if it doesn't do more to help her daughter."

If pirates were holding Nathalie Morin and her three children hostage would the Canadian government rescue her?

Morin, 24, is the Canadian woman who claims her Saudi husband Samir Said Ramthi Al-Bishi — whom she met in Canada — is holding her against her will in the kingdom, infamous for its appalling women's rights record. Morin's mother has threatened to sue the Canadian government for negligence if it doesn't do more to help her daughter.

Morin moved to Saudi Arabia in 2005, taking the Canadian-born child she had with Bishi with her. The couple has since had two more children, one of whom — according to Morin's mother — was conceived after rape.

Morin, who complained to her mother Bishi beats her and will not let her leave their apartment alone, visited Canada in 2006, but returned to Saudi Arabia saying she couldn't be without her children. Since then, Bishi has apparently refused to give her permission to travel, a requirement in the ultra-conservative kingdom.

Alleged marital rape? No leaving the house or travel without your husband's permission? Sound familiar?

Surely questions that should trouble Canada where horrified headlines recently chastised Afghan President Hamid Karzai for signing a law that allowed marital rape and barred women from leaving home without a husband's permission.

Where are the horrified headlines over women's rights in Saudi Arabia? Morin admitted it was a mistake to move to Saudi Arabia, so those who want her to lie in the bed she made of her own naiveté can move on.

But it is precisely those shouting "she should've known better" who should answer my pirate question. Did they blame U.S. Capt. Richard Philips and his crew for sailing along a stretch of water where Somali pirates had taken dozens of hostages?

I don't believe invasions can liberate women. Laws that guarantee equality and protect women's rights are more important than guns and tanks. But as a Muslim woman who has lived in Saudi Arabia and experienced that country's gender apartheid firsthand, I also know that when it comes to women's rights and international outcries some countries, to borrow from George Orwell, are more equal than others.

Mona Eltahawy is an award-winning Egyptian-born commentator and public speaker on Arab and Muslim issues. She reported on the Middle East for 10 years before moving to the U.S.

Worth mentioning

Eskimo candy complaint gets frosty Kiwi reception

By her own calculation, Canadian tourist Seeka Lee Veevee Parsons is the most disliked person in New Zealand right now just because of what she insists she is not: An Eskimo.

The Inuit woman is garnering headlines — and animosity — for suggesting a favourite New Zealand candy, the Eskimo Lolly, is racist and improper.

Veevee Parsons said yesterday that she has been shocked at the hostility she has created in the country she loved from the time she arrived two months ago by simply raising the issue of the candy she saw recently in a New Zealand store.

"Calling someone an Eskimo is no longer responsible," said the 21-year-old who is from Nunavut, but has been on an extended work holiday in New Zealand.

"When I was a kid, they used to call me a dirty Eskimo girl and it's a term that shouldn't be used anymore especially on a candy. Is it right that people go around eating shapes of people of another culture?"

The Eskimo Lolly, described as "cherished" and a "treasure" to New Zealanders, is a multi-coloured marshmallow candy in the shape of a person wearing a thick hooded jacket in front of an igloo.

Veevee Parsons, who is working at an organic farm near the city of Rotorua, said she made the comments to a TV station after being interviewed at a tourist information booth she was visiting.

Ever since the story about her complaint went on one TV station earlier this week, Veevee Parsons has been interviewed nearly a dozen times and viewers and readers have been responding by the thousands to her concerns. Most of the response has been personal attacks against Veevee Parsons including some telling her to go home and others insisting she shut up.

Daniel Ellis, spokesman for Cadbury/Pascall, the marker of the candy in New Zealand, said in an interview he's been surprised by the strong public opinions provoked by Veevee Parsons' comments.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

It's your turn to tell others what you think. Email your thoughts and opinions to: calgaryletters@metronews.ca

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100M oil barrels stored at sea: Frontline
Oil companies are storing close to 100 million barrels of crude oil at sea, the highest in recent times, according to Frontline, one of the world's biggest independent oil tanker owners. REUTERS

Business

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EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Flaherty sees recovery signs

FORECAST Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty sounded an upbeat note on the North American and global economies yesterday, saying he detected small signs of encouragement amid all the uncertainty.

Flaherty also said Canadian bond and capital markets were improving and that the United States would make significant progress in stabilizing its banking system in May.

"We see some stability in the economic performance, some resilience in China, GDP anticipated growth in India of six percent … so we are seeing some strength in some of the large emerging economies, but there is a significant degree of uncertainty that we face," he told reporters.

Flaherty maintained his assumption of a nominal GDP decline in Canada of 2.7 per cent this year, made in the January budget, saying that fiscal stimulus was now entering the economy. REUTERS

Business in brief

PROFIT McDonald's Corp. posted a higher profit yesterday and said April sales at established restaurants are doing as well as or better than their 4.3 per cent uptick in the first quarter despite the ongoing recession.

ENERGY EnCana Corp. is pumping another $290 million US into a big Louisiana natural-gas play despite depressed prices, Canada's biggest energy company said yesterday as it reported higher-than-expected profit. REUTERS

Defaults may rise: Report

Job losses the biggest threat to homeowners, author says

Canadian mortgage holders are facing significant challenges with a risk of increased mortgage defaults in the months ahead due to an uncertain jobs market, says a report.

Eight per cent of Canadian mortgage holders (representing 425,000 homeowners) indicated that being able to make a mortgage payment is currently an issue or concern, says a survey by the Canadian Association of Accredited Mortgage Professionals released yesterday.

Meanwhile, another 18 per cent of respondents, "a surprisingly large share," reported that either themselves or a primary earner in the household had lost a job in the past six months.

"The greatest risk facing the Canadian mortgage market is job loss," said Will Dunning, the chief economist for the association and author of the report. In a six-month period, from late 2008 to the time the survey was conducted in March 2009, job losses totalled 357,000 or 2.1 per cent of total Canadian employment, says the report.

About two per cent of Canadians report negative equity in their homes, where the value of the mortgage is greater than the value of the home. Another eight per cent have less than 10 per cent equity, says the report.

If house prices were to fall further, there would be an increase in homeowners with negative equity. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Falling behind

- Mortgages in arrears at the end of January were at 0.36 per cent, representing 14,024 mortgages, up from 0.27 per cent, or 10,100 mortgages, at the same time last year, says the Canadian Bankers Association.

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Colombian truckers strike
Colombian truck drivers went on strike yesterday to demand lower fuel prices, helping to underpin ICE arabica coffee futures. REUTERS

App stores do battle

Google, RIM hold their own against Apple

Mega-malls may be big, but when you need a fart-noise generator, sometimes it's the smaller shops that do the trick — at least that's true of the crop of virtual mobile retailers called "app stores."

Without doubt, Apple Inc.'s iTunes App Store rules the roost. But virtual shopping outposts on BlackBerry and Android phones offer interesting benefits of their own.

Shoppers will find that all of the stores — Research in Motion Ltd.'s BlackBerry App World, Apple's app store and Google Inc.'s Android Market — work well in practice. Each offers small software programs you can download to a phone for practical use (news services and weather reports) or special interests (virtual pets or weapons sounds).

The boy inside

- As to the logic of fart simulators on BlackBerry, which has a big following among business users and politicians: "The teenage boy is never too far from the grown-up executive," Current Analysis analyst Avi Greengart explained.

But the smaller stores have some benefits such as easier searching and flexibility moving between apps.

If you're looking for variety, there's no question who wins: RIM's store has around 1,000 apps; Google counted roughly 2,300 in March. Both are dwarfed by Apple's array of 25,000, and it has sold about one billion apps in less than a year.

But because of the abundance, there is room to improve the store's search feature.

One advantage users of G1, based on Google's Android system and made by HTC Corp., have over iPhone users is that the G1 can run more than one app at a time. For example, G1 can automatically broadcast your location, search for nearby friends or let you receive an instant message, all while you're in another app.

On BlackBerry, some apps were easier to pop in and out of than others.

Prices make another striking difference. Android and iPhone have lots of free apps and many priced below $1 US. RIM has some freebies, but its sales start at $2.99 per application.

REUTERS

Gaza **Bank open for business**

MOHAMMED SALEM/REUTERS

A Palestinian bank employee works at the Islamic National Bank in Gaza City yesterday. The first Hamas-licensed bank in the Gaza Strip has opened, a move that could help Palestinians in the impoverished territory bypass a financial blockade imposed by Israel and its western allies.

In **brief**

U.S. The United States bears "substantial" blame for the woes besetting the world economy, but it will take a global effort to ease those strains, Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said yesterday.

GE General Electric Co. chief executive Jeff Immelt faced a roomful of irate shareholders yesterday, many of whom blasted him for the decision to cut the dividend by 68 per cent. "By Mr. Immelt cutting the dividend by two-thirds, it hits the retirees who can no longer afford to live the lifestyle they are used to," said one company retiree. REUTERS

Global consumer activity trends level off: Nielsen

ECONOMY Consumer activity is showing signs of levelling off after a sharp drop last year and could indicate a potential bottom in the global downturn, data released yesterday showed.

The monthly Nielsen Economic Current scorecard showed that activity in 10 of the 11 countries monitored remained at the same pace in February from January, with only Germany showing an uptick to "neutral" from "negative."

The scorecard uses data collected by Nielsen on things like frequency of consumer shopping, consumer spending per trip, how much and what people are buying, and where they are shopping.

"What we have seen is a slowdown in the rate of the decline. We have seen a bottoming out," said James Russo, Nielsen's vice-president for global consumer insights. "We see a move toward neutral."

REUTERS

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Husky assets undervalued, analyst says

Husky Energy's assets in Southeast Asia may be worth up to $5 a share if the company follows through on plans to spin them off, much more than the value that the market currently attributes to them, an analyst said Wednesday. REUTERS

Flaherty hints at new credit-card rules

Under growing pressure to regulate credit-card fees and rates, federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty says he will soon announce measures to help consumers.

But the regulations are not expected to force a lowering of the interest rates charged on unpaid balances.

The move comes amid growing pressure from opposition parties, consumers and merchants who have complained credit-card fees and rates remain high despite falling interest rates and a weak economy.

"There are a number of issues that we can address with respect to credit cards," the finance minister told media yesterday. He said the federal budget, now passed, increased Ottawa's ability to regulate financial institutions.

"So we have regulatory power and we're working on certain regulations which I'll be able to speak about publicly soon," Flaherty said.

Officials said it is not expected that the government will force banks to lower credit-card interest rates, which reach 20 per cent or higher on unpaid balances.

But Flaherty is expected to require banks to provide a bit of a break to the 30 per cent of consumers who do not pay off their card balance in full each month.

The new rules would bar banks from eliminating the grace period between the time a purchase is made and the due date for paying off the purchase, the government said in its Jan. 27 budget.

Flaherty appeared to brush away complaints from opposition parties that credit-card interest rates have not been reduced even though the Bank of Canada has driven down short-term borrowing costs.

He explained "the cost of borrowing by banks, wholesale borrowing, has gone up," because of the shortage of credit brought about by the global recession.

Flaherty's remarks came a day before the House of Commons will debate a New Democrat motion calling on the government to tighten the rules governing credit-card operations.

The NDP wants Parliament to approve a mandate for the government to bar "abusive" fees, sudden interest rate increases and "aggressive" promotion of credit cards to consumers.

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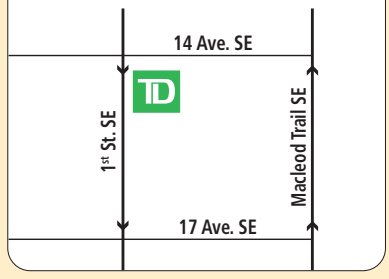

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U.K. budget deficit hits record level

ECONOMY Britain's budget deficit will soar to a record 175 billion pounds ($313 billion) as the economy shrinks at its fastest pace since the Second World War this year, Finance Minister Alistair Darling said yesterday.

To help bridge the yawning gap, Darling will slap a new 50 per cent tax rate on the highest earners, but the government will still have to issue a record 220 billion pounds ($394 billion) of government bonds, way above even the highest forecasts.

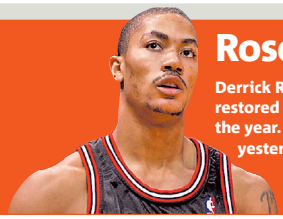
With an election due by June 2010 and the Labour Party way behind in the polls, Darling forecast the economy would start growing again next year, by as much as 1.5 per cent, and pledged several billion pounds of spending to support industry and jobs.

"The action already taken here, and internationally, and the measures I will announce today, mean that I expect the economy to start growing again towards the end of the year," Darling, 55, told a packed lower house for his second annual budget.

But analysts were sceptical that recovery could come so soon and even more so of forecasts that the economy would in two years start steaming ahead at a rate of 3.5 per cent to bring the public finances back on a sustainable path. REUTERS

Fridge remains in serious condition
Former Chicago Bear William (The Refrigerator) Perry remains in hospital in serious condition in South Carolina. The 46-year-old has been in hospital to deal with complications from Guillain-Barre Syndrome, a chronic inflammation disorder of the peripheral nerves. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports



Rose NBA's top rookie

Derrick Rose, who led his hometown Bulls to the playoffs and restored hope to a franchise in disarray, is the NBA's rookie of the year. Rose became the third Bulls player to win the award yesterday, joining Michael Jordan and Elton Brand.
METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: JOHN.CHICK@METRONEWS.CA

MIKE RIDEWOOD/GETTY IMAGES

Miikka Kiprusoff of the Calgary Flames covers up the puck from Dustin Byfuglien of the Chicago Blackhawks last night.

Flames even up series

STANLEY CUP
2009 Playoffs

(Series tied 2-2)

Blackhawks 4 Flames 6

LAURENCE HEINEN
for Metro Calgary

THE SKINNY: Eric Nystrom scored the game-winning goal at 13:04 of the third period to go with a pair of assists as the Flames tied up their first-round series against the Hawks, 2-2.

OLLI, OLLI, OLLI: In his fourth ever post-season contest, Calgary forward Olli Jokinen tallied his first two playoff goals and added an assist and was named the game's first star. Captain Jarome Iginla also scored twice and set up another.

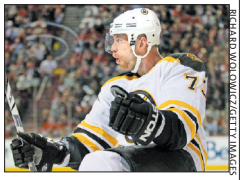
THE FIRST GOAL: After missing Game 3 with a bout of the flu, Patrick Kane returned to the Chicago lineup and roofed a pass from Patrick Sharp into the top corner at 4:40 of the opening frame for his first-ever NHL playoff goal.

THE MOMENTUM SHIFT: The Flames built up a 4-1 lead before Chicago rallied to tie the game 4-4 before the end of the second period as Kris Versteeg rallied the Hawks with a goal and two helpers.

THE NEXT GAME: The two teams now head back to Chicago's United Center for Game 5 on Saturday night (7 p.m., TSN, Fan 960)

Bruins bring their brooms

STANLEY CUP
2009 Playoffs


RICHARD WOLOWICZ/GETTY IMAGES

Former Hab Michael Ryder celebrates his goal.

Michael Ryder registered two goals and an assist, as the Boston Bruins came away with a convincing 4-1 victory over the Montreal Canadiens at Bell Centre, sweeping their Eastern Conference quarterfinal series.

David Krejci posted a goal and a helper for the top-seeded Bruins, who won their first playoff series since an opening-round triumph against Carolina in 1999. Phil Kessel also lit the lamp and Tim Thomas earned the win with a 26-save performance.

The 2008-09 campaign was expected to be a memorable one for Montreal, which was celebrating its centennial season, but a promising start filled with visions of a serious run at hockey's holy grail in hopes of a 25th title was followed by a second-half swoon and, ultimately, a bitter first-round exodus.

N.Y. Rangers 2, Capitals 1

Henrik Lundqvist made 38 saves to lead the New York Rangers over the Washington Capitals, 2-1, in Game 4 of their series at Madison Square Garden.

Paul Mara and Chris Drury tallied for the Rangers, who lead this set 3-1 and get their first chance to end this best-of-seven matchup in Washington on Friday. Alex Ovechkin notched the lone goal for the Capitals.

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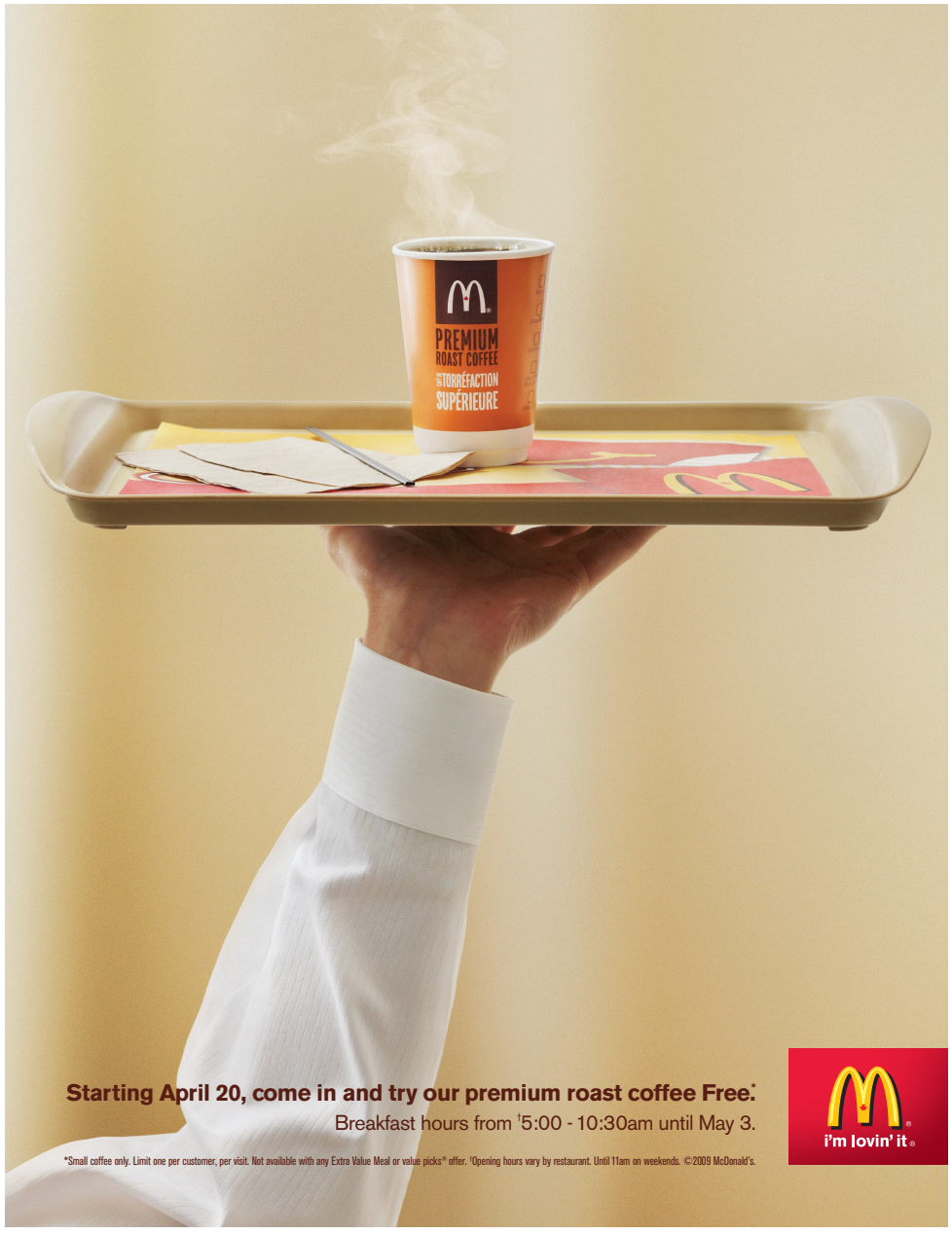
SCOREBOARD

NHL
STANLEY CUP PLAYOFFS YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
Boston 4 Montreal 1
N.Y. Rangers 2 Washington 1
Calgary 6 Chicago 4

NBA
PLAYOFFS YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
Orlando 96 Philadelphia 87
Miami 108 Atlanta 93
New Orleans at Denver

MLB
YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
Toronto 8 Texas 7 (11 ings)
Boston 10-7 Minnesota 1-3 (1st gm, 7 ings, rain)
Chicago White Sox 8 Baltimore 2
Kansas City 2 Cleveland 0
N.Y. Yankees 9 Oakland 7 (14 ings)
Detroit at L.A. Angels
Tampa Bay at Seattle
Arizona 2 Colorado 0
Atlanta 1 Washington 0
Cincinnati 3 Chicago Cubs 0
Houston 6 L.A. Dodgers 5
Milwaukee 3 Philadelphia 1
Pittsburgh 7 Florida 4
San Francisco 1 San Diego 0 (10 ings)
St. Louis 5 N.Y. Mets 2



Calgary's Nimik helps lead Canada to 6-0

Canada improved to 6-0 yesterday with a 9-6 win over England at the world mixed doubles curling championship in Italy. Calgary's Allison Nimik and Sean Grassie of Winnipeg used a trio of three-point ends to open up an early 9-1 advantage. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Versteeg, Mason, Ryan up for Calder

NHL Anaheim Ducks forward Bobby Ryan, Columbus Blue Jackets goaltender Steve Mason and Chicago Blackhawks forward Kris Versteeg are the finalists for the Calder Trophy as the NHL's rookie of the year, the league announced yesterday.

Lethbridge native Versteeg led all rookies with 31 assists while finishing second to Ryan with 53 points. The trophy will handed out June 18 at the NHL Awards in Las Vegas.

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TheHockeyNews

Brian Costello

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It has been five years since the epic Stanley Cup final playoff battle between the Flames and Tampa Bay Lightning.

Five years since Martin Gelinas scored the phantom Cup winner on home ice in Game 6. Five years since the Lightning won for real in Game 7.

Five years have passed, but the story is still the same for goalies Miikka Kiprusoff and Nikolai Khabibulin.

This year's opening round series between the Flames and Chicago Blackhawks has been so close, so intense, the biggest deciding factor so far has been the performances of said goalies.

Kiprusoff was good in Game 1 and 2 losses, Khabibulin was better. Chicago won both games by a goal.

If Kiprusoff had been a solid as Khabibulin, the Flames would have come home for Game 3 with a split, if not a sweep.

Game 3 was probably Calgary's weakest game of the series, yet the Flames won 4-2.

That's because Kiprusoff ramped up his performance from good to very good whereas the Flames finally found a way to solve Khabibulin.

Khabibulin's mastery of the Flames over the years has been stunning.

It would be nice to think that now that his bubble has burst, he's just another beatable goalie. But it's not that simple.

Khabibulin is big, has a croutch that covers a huge chunk of scoring space and still has fabulous reflexes for a 36-year-old.

Where he is beatable is fighting through screens and moving side to side.

Kiprusoff, on the other hand, is either very average this season or very good.

Much has been written about coach Mike Keenan overplaying him into exhaustion, but the simple fact remains, if Kipper gets hot, the Flames have the offensive horses to play well into May this spring.

The best-case scenario is Kiprusoff catching a case of his 2003-04 goaltending magic and carrying the Flames, even on nights when they're outplayed.

But that shouldn't be counted on or expected.

The outcome of the Calgary/Chicago will undoubtedly come down to goaltending.

The team that plays the strongest may not necessarily win.

The team that has the better goaltending will. Skaters such as Jarome Iginla and Jonathan Toews don't have nearly as much power and influence as Kiprusoff and Khabibulin.

The Hockey News thn.com

ROBERT LABERGE/GETTY IMAGES

Canada lost to the U.S. 4-1 in the world championship gold medal game on Easter weekend.

Women feeling heat

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

HOCKEY A silver medal is usually reason to celebrate, but in Canadian hockey, it puts a team under the microscope. The women's team is finding out the hard way after falling to the United States in the gold-medal game at the IIHF world championship in Finland on Easter weekend.

"For a lot of nations to get a medal at the world championship — whatever colour — they're happy," said Johnny Misley, Hockey Canada's executive vice-president. "Not with us. If we don't (win gold), we're going to ask a lot of questions."

With the 2010 Olympics around the corner, Misley is leading a review of the program to ensure it delivers on its promise as one of the country's best hopes for gold in Vancouver.

That process occurs every season, but Misley has taken the unusual step of setting a completion deadline of next week. The 4-1 loss was Canada's second straight setback in the world championship final and third in the past four tournaments.

"We were the far better team (than the U.S.) in that round robin game — it easily could have been a 5-1, 6-1 game," Misley said. "For some reason, 48 hours later, we laid a golden egg, or, pardon the pun, in this case, a silver egg."

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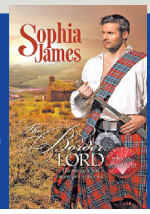

From TV to print

Colin McAllister and Justin Ryan, of Colin & Justin's Home Heist, will be on the covers of two May releases from Harlequin Books. Colin is seen here on the cover of The Border Lord, by Sophia James. Available May 7.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

Inviting birds to your backyard

HomeScape

Sylvia Putz

metronews.ca/homescape

Birds can provide a daily show, as well eat pesky mosquitoes.

With gorgeous spring weather greeting me more often on these mornings, I am starting to watch the birds as they go about their springtime business.

And I'm well aware of what business that is. And I know from the past year that there is a space on our new and partially built trellis that is a highly attractive nesting site. Last spring, my husband and I were awoken daily at 6 a.m. by the insistent peeping of baby birds.

I am kind of looking forward to it. Kind of, because I do not normally rise that early, but yet, the antics of a bird family are absorbing, interesting and quite often humorous. Maybe I'm getting old, but it's a lot better than some of the television shows I watch.

"The antics of a bird family are absorbing, interesting and quite often humorous. Maybe I'm getting old, but it's a lot better than some of the television shows I watch."

Besides providing a daily show of chirping, warbling, squawking and flapping about, birds also impart benefits such as eating mosquitoes, as well as plant-nibbling nasties such as aphids and grubs. Yes, they keep early hours; yes, they can make a racket; and yes, they can nibble on some species that you may grow for your own enjoyment, such as strawberries or sweet cherries. And yes, they sometimes build nests in places you may not prefer, such as in your dryer vent or chimney.

But these things can be managed. Besides, the pleasure they give by just being there, providing song, colour and movement, is considerable. For most of us, there is also some satisfaction in providing a habitat that supports and nurtures birds. Especially in an urban environment, birds face many challenges and making an easier time for them seems the right thing to do.

Even if your yard is small, there are some basics to make your yard more friendly to birds. Put out the welcome sign by planting some suitable species. That means plants that will provide some of the basic needs that birds have: food, shelter and nesting sites.

To provide food, plant trees, shrubs and plants with berries or seed heads. Mountain ash, with its orange berries, is one tree that birds love. Other shrubs and plants that birds love for their fruit or berries are holly or mulberry bushes (you'll need both male and female plants to get berries), flowering dogwood, sweet cherry trees, serviceberry, and Virginia creeper. Alder and white birch seeds are also food for some bird species.

Plant flowers with seed pods such as coneflowers, black-eyed susans, sedums, columbines, cosmos, zinnias, sunflowers and asters. Let the snow fall onto some of these fall-blooming plants in the early winter — their seed pods will stick out above the snow, providing interest to your garden in the winter and food for the birds. In fact, don't be too quick to clean up garden waste either, since twigs and leaves are used to build nests in spring.

When you choose trees and plants to populate your yard, stick to native trees which birds recognize and are familiar with, such as mountain ash, silver birch, hawthorne, crab apple and hazel. If you've got a large yard, larger trees such as oak and beech provide habitat for birds which populate a higher niche in the canopy.

Untrimmed hedges of native species provide superior habitat to a wide range of birds. Plant climbing vines against fences and walls, increasing the amount of habitat. (But beware of vigorous climbers, which can damage mortar or stucco. In this case, use a wooden screen to support the plant growth.)

If you put out birdhouses or boxes, be patient. Sometimes, birds are suspicious of something that looks new, and will only venture close when the box starts to weather. If you put out bird feeders, you will need to experiment with different seeds, as you'll need to discover what works in your area. Another important requirement for locating birdfeeders and houses is that they should be out of the reach of the huge number of roaming neighbourhood cats. Finally, birds need water as well, so a bird-bath, close to a bush or tree for those times when a quick escape is necessary, helps put out the welcome mat as well.

Then, you can sit back and enjoy the show!

Sylvia Putz is a journalist with an interest in decor and design. She's written for the TV show Arresting Design; sputz@arrestingdesign.com.

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Single-family home prices falling

SHELLEY WILLIAMSON
for Metro Canada

MARK BLINCH/REUTERS

Single-family home prices were 11 per cent lower last month than in March 2008, according to the Calgary Real Estate Board.

Calgarian Christa Stewart never thought she'd own a home.

Now inking a deal on an Oakridge townhome chock full of her wish-list items — three bedrooms, decent square footage and a yard with some privacy, near good schools and in a safe, established neighbourhood — the day she only dreamed of is here.

"I figured if there is a time to get into the market it's now," said Stewart. "I was paying $1,400 for rent and realized I could buy something for $1,600."

Dropping prices prompted her to mull purchasing for herself and her six-year-old son. Hoping for a June possession, she admits her disbelief. "It's kind of shocking I was able to find something in this neighbourhood."

Not long ago the process would have been different for Stewart, 30, who toured 20 places before choosing a "move-in ready," four-level split resale condominium.

While bidding wars fuelled by short supply and spiking prices shut many out of buying three years ago, MLS listings are now selling for 2 to 20 per cent below asking prices.

Single-family home prices were 11 per cent lower last month than in March 2008, according to the Calgary Real Estate Board — $420,354 was the average, to 2008's $474,513. And to the benefit of buyers like Stewart, the average Calgary condo was priced 9 per cent less, down to $284,056 last month from $312,620 last March.

"Pricing has come down about 20 per cent since the craziness of '06," said Natalie Borys, agent with Discover Real Estate Ltd., who recommends first home purchasers especially enlist a realtor to help navigate the market.

Builders are also responding to market changes by lowering home prices and including perks, such as hardwood floors and appliances.

Though zero-down and 40-year mortgages are obsolete, new government help for first-time buyers includes a $5,000 tax credit, a $750 credit for closing costs and relaxed rules on RRSPs which now let homebuyers withdraw $25,000 for a down payment.

"It's a good time to buy because it is a buyer's market and you are spoiled by choice," said Borys, adding, "Today's interest rates are from 10 years ago."

Before you buy

- Get a realtor. If looking for a condo, make it a condo specialist who can speak to condo fees and other factors affecting payments and choice.
- Get pre-approved for a mortgage.
- Be realistic about your budget.
- Determine and set aside your down payment and closing costs.
- Be patient. Most first-timers visit 10 to 20 properties (at least) before buying.

Do homework before buying, first-timers told

BRIAN COULTON
for Metro Canada

First-time buyers tend to be enthusiastic about getting on the property ladder, Calgary-based realtor Aphrodite Karamitsanis says.

Owning property may cause renters to rejoice at the thought of actually having something to show for the money they're spending. But realtor Aphrodite Karamitsanis warns not to let that initial thrill become overkill.

"First-time buyers are very enthusiastic and sometimes very unrealistic about what they can afford and what they'd like to own," said Karamitsanis, the Calgary-based agent for Royal LePage Canada.

Completing one's financial homework — particularly determining down payment and monthly payments — is the most critical thing for first-time buyers to do before they begin even looking at properties, so they understand what they can afford, she said. Then, the first consideration should be "location, location, location."

"It's still the operative phrase in real estate," said Karamitsanis, "where they're going to live, and what they're looking for in terms of their home — how many bedrooms, how many bathrooms and how finished the home is."

"Sweat equity" is something she said first-time buyers should especially consider when purchasing a home. That's how much work one is willing to spend renovating areas of the home to build financial equity. Kitchens and bathrooms are the most expensive rooms to renovate, she said, so she recommends new buyers work from the bottom up. "If they buy a home with an unfinished basement, one of the best ways to build equity is to finish the basement."

Manual labour must be a labour of love when deciding to buy a home — the chief difference between owning a house and a condominium, said Toronto realtor Robert Doyle of Bosley Real Estate.

"With a condominium, you really only own what's behind your door and maybe a parking spot. The whole benefit of ownership is being able to plant your garden and grow your grass and shovel your driveway in the winter ... the true Canadian activity of home ownership," he said with a chuckle.

The grass isn't the only thing necessarily greener with home ownership. Homes and condos alike are increasingly embracing eco-friendly technologies.

"There's definitely an advantage to buying green," Doyle said. "We have the technology now that we can make things more efficient, safer and better for the environment, not only for ourselves, but for generations afterwards."

That's not to mention the advantage Doyle said going green has on your wallet; a sure aid to one of the greatest financial investments one can make.

"If you own a home, having a home energy audit done — an eco home audit — is definitely an eye-opening experience in terms of cost savings."

Want a condo?

According to Royal LePage realtor Aphrodite Karamitsanis, purchasing a condo is a lifestyle decision that includes the following factors:

- No yard maintenance
- Owning a share in a larger corporation
- Less freedom to make structural changes
- Decisions are often made for you

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Rental suite can be a great investment

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

RAFAEL BRUSILOW/FOR METRO CANADA

A home valued at $350,000 could pay off as much as an extra $1,000 a month, says Income Property host Scott McGillivray.

Is your mortgage weighing you down and draining your monthly coffers? Maybe it's time to put that empty basement to work for you by turning it into a legal rental suite.

Scott McGillivray, host of the hit show Income Property on HGTV, says many homeowners, particularly first-timers, don't quite realize how much income potential lurks within their own home.

"A lot of first-time buyers don't even consider having an income suite in their home and everyone should consider it. It's a great investment for the future," McGillivray said.

With the right circumstances and proper renovations, a home valued at just $350,000 could pay off as much as an extra $1,000 every month with a good apartment unit, he says.

When looking for a home with income potential, don't go overboard, McGillivray says — choose practicality over fantasy.

"Be modest with what you can afford and be reasonable with what you really need. Don't be greedy," McGillivray said.

One of the biggest mistakes McGillivray sees homeowners make is trying to rent out a dingy basement apartment without renovating it. Invest some money, he says, and make your basement apartment somewhere you would personally love to live — it'll lead to better tenants and higher rents in the long run.

"If you're going to rent out a space, make sure that it's up to you own standards. Don't expect people will settle for less than you would settle for. Rather than charging less, fix the place up so you can charge more. You'll get better tenants that way," McGillivray said.

If you're thinking of buying a home with some extra income potential, McGillivray suggests looking for a few things:

- A separate entrance. It allows for privacy.
- Good ceiling height. If it's too low for you to live in, it's too low to rent.
- Decent window sizes. Light is important and makes an apartment much more livable.
- Extra parking. A spot can be worth up to $100 per month.

If the seller says the property is already tenanted, check to make sure and ask to see an up-to-date zoning permit for the apartment.

"Know what you're getting yourself into and don't make assumptions. Be smart and look into things," McGillivray said.

Be aware that many suburban areas don't allow rental apartments in private homes, so check to make sure having an apartment is legal before counting rental income in your home-buying calculations.

McGillivray hopes more people will consider using their home to generate extra income.

"It's all about taking action. If you can get your house to work for you, do it!" McGillivray said.

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Cottages need maintenance, too

Bryan Baeumler is host of Disaster DIY: Cottage Edition, airing tonight at 9 p.m. on HGTV. Visit hgtv.ca/disasterdiy for streamed episodes and exclusive content.

Close your eyes for a moment and imagine you're at a cottage. The faint aroma of mouldy lumber drifts by on the breeze, and your leaking hot tub sits on a rotting deck with your favourite sports car parked below — what would you do?

Like cottage owner CB, most of us head to the cottage to relax, using 'It's OK, it's just the cottage' as an excuse to avoid regular maintenance and much-needed repairs.

Although CB's party deck off the front of the cottage had a roof, the floor had been built on an angle. The railings were dangerously low to preserve the view, which presented the opportunity for a 12-foot fall to the hard ground below.

The moisture sandwich of carpet, plywood and deck boards was rotting out from under them thanks to a leaking hot tub, and to top it all off, his prized sports car — parked under the structure — was in danger of having a rooftop deck.

I taught CB how to replace the support posts and structure of the deck to bring it up to code and make it level. After waiting for what seemed like an eternity for him to field numerous phone calls, I taught him how to replace the decking to allow for drainage, while keeping out the mosquitoes. We also built railings that were not only up to code, but allowed for a great view of the lake as a bonus.

Safe deck, great view — time to hit the lake!

Bryan Baeumler is host of Disaster DIY: Cottage Edition. The show airs Thursdays at 9 p.m. on HGTV.

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Home inspections crucial, experts say

LEYLA EMORY
for Metro Canada

It's what's inside that counts. Just ask your realtor.

"You fall in love with something and you see what's in front of you, but a home inspector can get to the nitty-gritty of a place, like the mechanics and structure," says Tatiana Londono, founder of Chartered Real Estate Agents at Londono Realty Group and host of HGTV's Property Shop. "Hiring a home inspector can avoid all sorts of headaches."

Home inspection is a crucial step in the home buying process. But an inspection is only as good as the inspector. "The number one mistake I see people make is looking for the house before the home inspector," says Mike Holmes of Holmes on Homes and author of The Holmes Inspection. "It's like getting the trailer before the horse. When you find the house that you like, usually it's down to crunch time and you're willing to hire anyone that's got a pulse to come in and do an inspection."

So start inspecting early. There are plenty of ways to go about finding a good home inspector. Sandra Rinomato, host of HGTV's Property Virgins, suggests going on the recommendation of a realtor but acknowledges that this can be sticky. Realtors routinely deal with home inspectors and have first-hand knowledge of their work. But there can be conflicts of interest.

"Sometimes agents are in with their inspectors and they'll make an inspection pass," says Londono. "But a lot of times buyers have no idea how to look for an inspector."

To avoid liabilities, both Londono and Rinomato provide the names of three to five home inspectors they've worked with in the past and let their clients make the final choice.

Here's where your own inspection comes in. Whether going on a recommendation or picking up the Yellow Pages, the key is to ask questions.

"Ask 1,001 questions," says Holmes. "How long have you been in the business? What did you specialize in before? Do you have a background in building, and if so, what is it? How long were you doing that? Can I have a sample report of what you've given someone else?"

For Holmes, it's getting inside that counts: "If they say all I need is a flashlight, a ladder and a notepad, that's not good enough ... I use thermographic imaging cameras, air quality tools, snake cameras that can go through every little crevasse that a mouse can. If they have tools like this, it excites me. It means that they care."

Share your story

- Mike Holmes is looking for homeowners who have had bad home inspections and are now faced with repairs they didn't anticipate. Go to makeitright.ca, and you could end up on TV.

HGTV PHOTO

Ask home inspectors "1,001 questions," advises home building expert Mike Holmes.

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Budget-friendly decor possible

NOELLE MUNARETTO
for Metro Canada

Owning your first home means finally having a space to call your own.

And, one of the best ways to make sure that space truly conveys your personality is through interior design.

While the new mortgage and some minor renovations may leave your pockets a little lighter, three of Canada's top designers reveal that beautiful home decor can still be achieved on budget.

Toronto-based interior designer Meredith Heron, of Restaurant Makeover fame, says the first step for first-timers is to not take any steps at all.

"If they can invest in three to six months of not doing anything, that is an amazing investment," says Heron.

She says she recommends living in the space for a while, feeling it out and saving up some money for the project.

"Slow the process down. Don't build Rome in one day," she adds.

IKEA PHOTO

Stylish accessories need not break the bank, such as this Alvine Bar duvet cover with two pillowcases, which retails for $39.99 at Ikea.

After that, Heron says a good way to start is by choosing furniture and paint in neutral shades.

"It's all about what you can do when you have a blank canvas," she says. "White is friendly."

Designer Glenn Dixon, host of W Network's Take This House and Sell It!, agrees that it is important to have neutral basics in place before the design fun really begins.

"Then, one of the best ways to make a space your own is colour," he says.

Dixon says smaller items like throws, pillows and accessories in funky trend colours can all be sourced on the cheap. But before tackling the budget design stores, clearance racks, antique boutiques or flea markets, Dixon says it's also important to have a plan.

"My best advice for people is to research magazines for ideas," he says. "Then create a book of inspirations with the clippings."

"Slow the process down. Don't build Rome in one day."
Meredith Heron

Ada Bonini, principal of Vancouver's Bob's Your Uncle Design, says artwork is the final step to tie a room together. If you can't afford gallery pieces, Bonini offers inexpensive DIY solutions.

"One of the quickest things to do ... is to go and get some canvas from the art store and practise your painting abilities," she says.

If abstract painting isn't your thing, Bonini says another way to get the fine art look is to frame a series of reprints from your favourite art books, or even black-and-white family photos.

But no matter how big or small your budget, all three designers agree that creating the perfect space doesn't happen overnight.

"You don't need to have the dream home right away," says Dixon. "It is something that evolves over time."

Advertising Feature

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Presented by Nathan Singh ~ Licensed Realtor in the Province of Alberta

Green building market expected to grow

Even in a down market, Canadians recognize the long-term, cost-saving value of building a home with sustainable materials. Survey findings show that over the next five years, the green building market in North America is expected to double, with up to 20 per cent of us insisting on the use of sustainable materials.

"A green home uses less energy, water and natural resources," says Todd Blyth at Nudura, the manufacturer of insulated concrete forms. "It creates less waste and is healthier and more comfortable for the occupants. Equally important benefits include lower energy bills, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and less exposure to mold, mildew and other indoor toxins. As a result, the net cost of owning a sustainable home is comparable to cost of a conventional one."

When talking to your builder, ask for materials and systems that meet established green criteria. Such building materials are identifiable if they're rated by LEED, the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design organization. LEED encourages and accelerates global adoption of sustainable green building and development practices. It provides a third-party certification program, setting an international benchmark for the construction and operation of high performance sustainable buildings.

"Concrete is a good place to begin," says Blyth. "Concrete walls are far superior in performance than the old wood frame method. A home that begins its construction with efficient, pre-assembled, interlocking concrete blocks will deliver significant, on-going benefits to your lifestyle, to the environment, to your operating costs, and to the overall re-sale value of the house."

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No reason to fear the 'M' word, experts say

BRIAN COULTON
for Metro Canada

For most new home buyers that don't have the capital to fully pay for their property, the pleasure of purchase can be oft overshadowed by the dreaded 'M' word.

"A lot of people have the idea that a mortgage is actually the biggest debt of their life," said Bruna Anacleto, Toronto mortgage specialist for Royal Bank of Canada. "It's really not. It's an investment."

It's also the only property loan homebuyers can acquire, outside of one from family and friends. And the first step Anacleto recommends toward acquiring a mortgage is obtaining a pre-approval, which she said both qualifies you for the loan and gives you a sense of how much you're financially qualified to purchase.

"People tend to dream a little and think their financial situation is one way, but it might actually be another," she said. So before setting your heart on that $500,000 dream home, a pre-approval will assess if you can really afford it. "You may think, with your salary, you can, but you're not taking into consideration your debt load."

And what qualifies as debt isn't always so apparent. Anacleto said most people don't know that a line of credit, for example, counts as debt, in full. "You may have a zero balance on that line of credit, but we assume that you've withdrawn the whole thing," she said. "The reason for that is because that's credit you can obtain at any point in time, so we want to ensure you can pay that back if that happens."

Paying back a mortgage over tens of years may seem like a daunting task. But there are strategic ways to do it. Barry Rathburn is a mobile mortgage specialist for TD Canada Trust on Vancouver Island. He recommends accelerating your payment by paying an amount higher than the minimum required, that you feel comfortable with, to make repaying more flexible down the road.

"One of your benefits is that you can up to double your payments," said Rathburn. He offers the example of a minimum mortgage payment of $295. A "comfortable" payment for a couple might be $450. But what if that couple decides to have a child? "Now, $450 is not a comfortable payment. Maybe it's a stretch," he said. "Having the privilege to increase and decrease your payment at will is a great financial planning tool to manage your cash flow."

Mortgage pre-approvals let you know how much you can afford.

Mortgage tips

TD specialist Barry Rathburn offers the following mortgage knacks:

- You can pre-pay 15 per cent of your original mortgage balance each year. If completed yearly, your mortgage would be paid off in about seven years.
- Obtain mortgage insurance, to cover the amount of mortgage debt if you or your spouse falls ill or dies.
- Get approved for the longest possible repayment period to decrease the amount paid in the long run.

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Food

All peppers start out as green and tart. As they ripen they turn first yellow, orange, or red depending on the cultivar grown.

BARB HOLLAND/FOR METRO CANADA

Sweet
The darker they become, the sweeter and more mellow the taste.

EDITOR: NINA DRAGICEVIC, NINA.DRAGICEVIC@METRONEWS.CA

The gems under the glass

À la carte

After a seemingly endless winter, we look forward to warm weather and the first vegetables of the season: asparagus, early greens and rhubarb. But between those first crops (usually May) and the lingering winter storage vegetables (carrots, cabbage and squash), greenhouse vegetables are a welcoming fresh taste — and locally grown.

As our short summers limit the quanity of field vegetables grown, Canada has been at the forefront of greenhouse production for decades.

Greenhouse vegetable production occurs in every province, with Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec as the largest producers.

According to the B.C. Greenhouse Growers' Association, more than five varieties of tomatoes, sweet bell peppers, hot peppers, mini peppers, long English cucumbers, mini cucumbers and butter lettuce are grown under glass.

Vine-ripened and hand-picked, greenhouse vegetables are premium quality and virtually pesticide-free, thanks to the use of natural predators to control pests.

As always, read labels when grocery shopping to buy locally grown greenhouse vegetables.

As always, read labels when grocery shopping to buy locally grown greenhouse vegetables.

Lightly Roasted Tri-Pepper Salad

From Foodland Ontario, this colourful salad made with greenhouse peppers is best served slightly warm or at room temperature. Serve with grilled chicken or pork. Serves 6.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 each red, yellow and orange greenhouse peppers
- 3 tbsp (45 ml) extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) balsamic or red wine vinegar
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Salt and pepper
- 1/3 cup (75 ml) crumbled goat cheese
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) torn fresh basil leaves

METHOD:

Cut each pepper into quarters, discarding seeds and stems. Place on a barbecue grill over medium heat. Grill until softened and just lightly charred, 15 to 20 minutes, turning as needed.

Whisk together oil, vinegar, garlic, salt and pepper to taste. Slice peppers into strips and toss with dressing in a large bowl.

Place on serving plate, sprinkle with goat cheese and basil.

Barb Holland is a professional home economist and food writer who believes in shopping locally and in season.

What to look for at the grocery store
"Fill your grocery cart with foods that are colourful because this means they are packed with nutrients — if it is from the farm eat it, if not, proceed with caution," says registered dietitian Helene Charlebois. METRO NEWS SERVICES

⊕⊕⊕⊕⊕ INSPIRED; ⊕⊕⊕⊕ VERY GOOD; ⊕⊕⊕ PALATABLE; ⊕⊕ HO-HUM; ⊕ NEVER AGAIN

Lasagna: Second helping

Recently, Metro featured a super easy lasagna recipe from Barb Holland (visit metronews.ca/alacarte if you missed it) for cooks that are pressed for time. To jazz up your lasagna on the weekend, however, try something new.

This Martha Stewart recipe requires all store-bought ingredients and an hour's cooking time. You could substitute fried bacon for the more expensive prosciutto, or jazz up your store-bought sauce with sautéed mushrooms or other vegetables. Make sure you squeeze the spinach dry or the lasagna will be too runny. From Food Everyday magazine.

INGREDIENTS:
- 2 300 g packages frozen spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
- 1 (475 g) container ricotta cheese
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Salt and fresh pepper to taste
- 2-1/2 cups (600 ml) store-bought pasta sauce
- 4 oz (113 g) thinly sliced prosciutto, chopped
- 3 sheets fresh lasagna noodles
- 1 cup (250 ml) shredded mozzarella cheese

METHOD:
In medium bowl, mix spinach, ricotta, garlic, salt and pepper. Set aside.

In another medium bowl, mix pasta sauce with prosciutto.

Trim lasagna noodles to fit 8-by-8-inch casserole dish. Spread 1/4 cup sauce on bottom of dish.

Place 1 lasagna sheet on top. Spread one-third ricotta mixture on top with fingers. Top with one-third pasta sauce. Repeat twice.

Sprinkle mozzarella on top. Bake in 375 F oven 35 minutes until top is bubbling and brown. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Great for coffee, good for a bite

LunchRush

Carla Ciccone

metronews.ca/lunchrush

Good Earth Café
F707 7th Avenue S.W.
403-264-3445

Hours of operation: Mon - Fri, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sat, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕
Price range: $
Reservations: No
Client negotiations: No
Lunch w/co-workers: Yes
Social Lunch: Yes
Quick solo lunch: Yes
Time in: 12:15 p.m.
Ordered: 12:20 p.m.
Food arrived: 12:23 p.m.
Time out: 12:35 p.m.
Total time: 20 minutes
Low $: Small Soup, $3.85
High $: Panini Sandwiches, $7.50
Lunch menu: : Same Menu, Daily Specials
Licensed: No

For a quick meal, Good Earth makes some decently fresh and nice tasting dishes and sandwiches that can be consumed either in the café, or taken to go.

Popular coffee house Good Earth Café is a quick, friendly place to grab a lunch — and unlike a lot of popular coffee chains, the food isn't half bad!

As usual, I have coffee on the brain as I stop by Good Earth because they generally make it well.

They use top quality beans, which are imported and roasted by Fratello Coffee Roasters here in Calgary — who choose beans from Rainforest Alliance certified farmers, and the result is delicious coffee that is both eco- and fair-trade friendly.

Today, I was intrigued by an interesting looking item while checking out the food display, so I opted to stay for lunch. The colourful concoction I was eyeing — and ended up picking — was the Bean and Lentil Stew ($5.37 with bread, which is 75-cents).

It was a pretty orange colour and had a delicate, tarragon-infused taste. The dish as flavourful, but not overly spicy, and although it lacked the beans and lentils it was named for, the rice, peas and celery that were actually in the dish were very good. It was less of a stew and more of a rice dish in terms of consistency.

The hearty piece of bread I got with the stew also complimented the little lunch quite nicely. I've also always been a fan of their renowned and very cheesy mac and cheese.

For a quick meal, Good Earth makes some decently fresh and nice tasting dishes and sandwiches that can be consumed either in the café, or taken to go.

They also have free wireless Internet at this location, in case you'd like to stay a while and surf the Net.

To finish off my Good Earth lunch experience, I grabbed a no-foam cappuccino on the way out — the perfect conclusion to my quick lunch on the go.

CARLA CICCONE/FOR METRO CANADA

I picked the Bean and Lentil Stew ($5.37 with bread).

LiquidAssets

Peter Rockwell

metronews.ca/liquidassets

A great grape

What makes a particular grape variety the darling of liquor store shelves? It's a question that wakes up winemakers in a cold sweat in the middle of the night and gives liquid scribes like yours truly oodles of analytical inspiration.

Lately I've been working on why consumers are so crazy about Pinot Grigio (a.k.a. Pinot Gris). After much thought, and more than a few glasses, I think the reason is twofold: First, being easy to pronounce and fun to say has literally put it on the tip of everyone's tongue; and second, it produces simple, quaffable vino that sucks in consumers like a magnet draws metal.

When it comes to true Italian versions **Voga's 2007 Pinot Grigio ($13.95 to $17.99)** is lean, green and rounds all the classic flavour bases while coming wrapped in one of the coolest bottles I've seen in ages. Of course every country has jumped on the bandwagon and **California's Barefoot Cellars Pinot Grigio ($9.95 to $11.99)** in a non-vintage charmer that's packed with juicy fruit.

The way it quenches my thirst on a warm day is what I dig most about the grape. Try it with fresh melon, a little Prosciutto and maybe some mozzarella or Brie and you'll see what I mean.

Prices reflect the range across the country. Some products may not be available in all provinces.

Peter Rockwell is the everyman's wine writer, working in the liquor industry for more than 25 years and travelling the globe looking for something to fill his glass and put into words.

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Visit TLC.com's new Say Yes To The Dress website for bridal tips, videos and quizzes. The site's Virtual Bridal Boutique allows visitors to customize an avatar and try on wedding dresses that tailor to their specific body type. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Style

Scent of an actress

This spring Oscar-winning actress Halle Berry introduces her first signature fragrance, Halle by Halle Berry. Partnering with Coty Inc., the former Catwoman has created a sensuous fragrance that incorporates ingredients like mimosa, fig, hibiscus flower, sandalwood, musk and amber. Halle by Halle Berry is available at major drug and mass retailers nationwide for $35/30ml and $49/50ml. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

Fabulously fake pearls of wisdom

Fashion classic returns with a flashy, punkish twist

This season, ladylike pearls get punk'd.

As this fashion classic makes a return engagement, those creamy-coloured beads are the sized of gum balls, strung on thick silk ribbons or intertwined with cascades of punkish chains. This is not your grandmother's necklace.

"Pearls used to be a love token. Your husband gave you pearls or your grandmother bequeathed you her pearls," says vintage costume jewellery connoisseur Carole Tanenbaum. "But the love token has been pushed aside and the rock star of pearls has emerged."

And, like the star they have become, they are gloriously, fabulously fake and begging to be noticed.

If you had to zero in on the moment when faux pearls were poised for a comeback, it would have to be last summer's blockbuster chick flick Sex and the City. Retailers and designers sat in cineplexes to see what their four favourite fashionistas were wearing. And there it was, looking suddenly new and fresh on Carrie, who was wearing a long strand of pearls in an insouciant way — to bed.

Expression necklace, $20, The Bay.

Sure enough, by the time September and October rolled around and designers were showing their spring/summer 2009 collections, tricked-out faux-pearl necklaces were seen on several runways, from Luella Bartley in London to Moschino in Milan to Alber Elbaz at Lanvin in Paris.

Necklace with pendant, $30, Aldo Accessories.

But props must be given to Elbaz for diligently giving pearls a makeover. For the past several seasons, ever since he wrapped his pearls in tulle and strung them on a necklace, the designer has been working the pearl necklace in increasingly innovative yet delectably ultra-feminine ways. This season, his pearls are strung on his trademark thick silk ribbons.

Fashion's newest "It" girl seemed to have picked up a penchant for pearls, too.

Michelle Obama's necklaces have been anything but the traditional dowager kind favoured by past first ladies.

Her pearls have included a simple strand of ping-pong-sized balls and a heavily, multi-strand necklace by jewellery designer Tom Binns.

Everyone has fallen in love with pearls again, it seems.

"I can't tell you how many we've sold for spring. It has been crazy," says jewellery designer Rita Dobberstein, whose line, Rita D., is also sold in the U.S. and Europe.

Inspired by the '40s, Dobberstein mixed giant pearls with cascades of chains for a look that she calls "punk meets Mad Max with a bit of rock 'n' roll."

It was time to do it differently, said the Toronto designer. The look she created "caters to a different kind of customer, someone edgy perhaps, who never thought they would wear pearls," she adds.

Dobberstein says that while she has dabbled with pearls in her career of more than 20 years, she has never sold as many as she has this year, and she'll continue using them in her fall collection.

But why do fashionistas seem to be going off the deep end for pearls right now?

"In low economic times like these, women need something to cheer themselves," says Tanenbaum. And these bigger styles make them happy," says Tanenbaum. "And pearls always make a statement."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Style in brief

TELEVISION Bravo has greenlighted a celebrity version of a Project Runway-style show and has a new project for Work Out star Jackie Warner. The network is set to announce Launch My Line at its "upfront" programming presentation to advertisers next Tuesday. Originally titled Celebrity Sew Off, the series features a group of famous faces vying to launch their own clothing line. Each contestant will be paired with a fashion design expert who will help realize the celebrity's creative vision. REUTERS

FlareFashion
Lisa Tant
Read the blog at metronews.ca/flarefashion

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Encore!

Project Runway Canada's top three finalists reconnect for an exclusive runway show

By **LAURA DECARUFEL**
Senior Editor

Fashion might not always be pretty, as Iman says, but it's always compelling. This season of Project Runway Canada was full of drama, from two contestants leaving the show for health reasons (on the very first episode!), to the uproar that ensued after one aspiring designer (ahem, Brandon) revealed that he was unfamiliar with the work of fashion legend Yves Saint Laurent. But the real news was on the runway, particularly in the creations of the top three finalists: Jessica Biffi, Jason Meyers and Sunny Fong, the talented Toronto designer who was crowned the winner last week. "The biggest surprise is how passionate viewers are about the show," says Fong. "How little things like me hugging my mother on the runway made people tear up. It's amazing."

This Saturday afternoon, Fong, Biffi, Meyers and their PRC mentor Brian Bailey are joining forces for a special fashion show during the all-day ELLE event in Toronto, Ont. The designers will be showcasing their finale collections, which debuted during Toronto Fashion Week in March. "The finale show was a closed show, so only a select few were able to experience it," explains Fong. "It will be really cool for the public to have the same 'live' experience." Afterwards, Bailey will host a Q&A, so fans can get an insider peek into all the behind-the-scenes gossip.

Project Runway Canada finalists Jason Meyers (far left), Jessica Biffi and winner Sunny Fong.

Editors' Pick

FASHION STARS

Want to experience a runway show featuring the best of Canadian fashion? Check out the ELLE event this Saturday, where top designers, including Tavan & Mitto (shown), Renata Morales, and Marie Saint Pierre, will show their Spring 2009 collections!

MAUDE ARSAUNAULT/MODEL–GIGI

SEAWORLD

Splash some fun in shades of blue

Metal and resin-bead chandelier earrings ($15, at Aldo Accessories)

More cool spring looks will be showcased by Denis Desro, ELLE Canada's editor-in-chief (fashion), at an event this weekend. She will give an exclusive spring runway report of the season's hottest fashion trends, from the jumpsuit to the wedge sandal. Check out elleshow.ca for details.

Floral tiered silk dress, Nougat London ($265, 1-888-356-9226)

Resin-bead bracelets ($45 each, at The Bay)

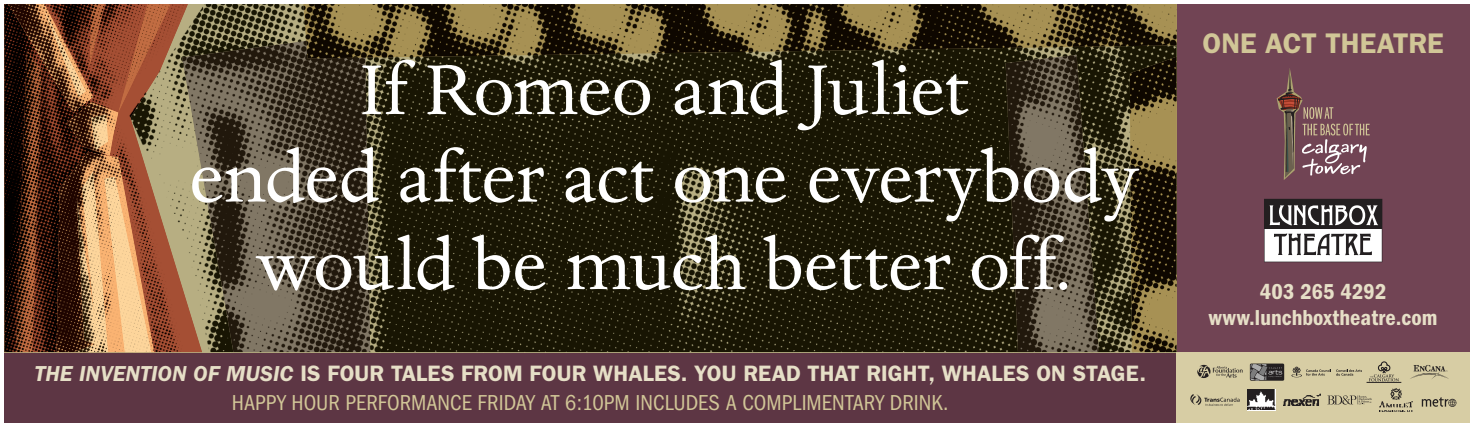
PVC handbag ($35, at Aldo)

Leather and wood platform wedge sandals ($100, at Aldo)

HOT BEAUTY

Summertime means sexy sundresses, evenings on the patio — and a whole new beauty look. The objective? Sun-kissed skin with perfectly painted lips and lids in summer shades of rose and coral. But before you toss your trusty foundation and stock up on bronzer, learn how to do it right. At the ELLE event this Saturday, Val Garland, the artistic advisor for Yves Saint Laurent Makeup, and Jacquie Hutchinson, the national product trainer for Revlon, will outline summer's prettiest makeup trends — and how to achieve them.

YSL Palette D'Artiste Collector Powder for the Eyes ($78)



Rice meets with Idol judge

Former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice thinks Randy Jackson is top dawg. When the classically trained pianist, 54, was in L.A. for her March 24 appearance on The Tonight Show With Jay Leno, she arranged to meet the American Idol judge, 52, for a private sit-down. PEOPLE.COM

Entertainment

Not for sale

No evidence suggests Rafiq Qureshi tried to sell his young daughter, Slumdog Millionaire actress Rubina Ali, say police in India after an investigation. PEOPLE.COM

EDITOR: DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

⊕⊕⊕⊕⊕ A CLASSIC; ⊕⊕⊕⊕ EXCELLENT; ⊕⊕⊕ GOOD; ⊕⊕ FAIR; ⊕ POOR

Rocker Ida Maria kicks butt

Ida **Maria**

Album: Fortress Round My Heart **Label:** Mercury/Universal
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕⊕½

IT WAS START-ING to get too easy to be a pop singer. All you had to do to make the grade, it seemed, was take on a retro sound and a name like Duffy or Adele. So it was about time that somebody like Ida Maria, 24-year-old rocker from Norway, came along to kick some deserved butt. Her forthright approach — so wonderfully demonstrated on her first single I Like You So Much Better When You're Naked — has already hit the charts in England. There's a celebratory charm to her off-key punk squawk that cuts through the crap on songs like Oh My God and Stella. She's the woman everyone wants to go out and get hammered with. Yet she also shows fragility on Keep Me Warm and desperation on Forgive Me. There's an attraction here that's unexplainable. Call it attitude, call it allure. Just give us more Ida Maria.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

Ida Maria is forthright on her latest album Fortress Round My Heart, which is now out.

Depeche **Mode**

Album: Sounds of the Universe
Label: Capital/EMI
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕½

JUST BECAUSE THE '80s new-wave revival died out a couple years ago, doesn't mean the bands who actually came from that era have disappeared. Sounds of the Universe is new-wave pioneers Depeche Mode's 12th album and it's another synth-heavy blast of brooding electro sounds. Like the band's past work this is a highly emotive effort with plenty of fuzzy distortion and passionate croons from singer Dave Gahan. Some might be surprised that nearly 30 years on these guys can still create a pretty great listen, but they've done it and show no signs of slowing down.

Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

Asher **Roth**

Album: Asleep in the Bread Aisle **Label:** SRC/Universal
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕½

FRAT BOY RAP? This CD would have been much easier to review if it was by Weird Al Yankovic. But the satire contained in I Love College — Roth's hilarious anthem to white male hedonism — hits too close to the truth. Just ask Michael Phelps. For some, undergraduate life indeed seems to be all about smoking dope, drinking near-lethal quantities of booze, vomiting, passing out and bragging about all the naked women they almost met. Comparisons to Eminem are ludicrous, but come nonetheless. Roth, an unabashed suburbanite from a good middle-class home near Philadelphia, handles them deftly on As I Em. Although it's hard not to laugh out loud with songs like Blunt Cruisin' and Bad Day, this is not a novelty disc. The music on tracks like She Don't Wanna Man, His Dream and Lion's Roar is just too good.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

Music**Reviews**

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Bat For **Lashes**

Album: Two Suns
Label: Echo/Parlophone/EMI
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕½

KATE BUSH USED to concoct ethereal art rock like this; same for Tori Amos, Sarah McLachlan and Björk to some extent. So what sets Natasha Khan's m.o. apart from these aforementioned greats? As this sophomore disc attests, the British songstress proffers a more ear-pleasing soprano, along with an imaginative dual lyrical character — a sometime spiritual mystic, a sometime sex-driven femme fatale — worth following. With a backdrop of reverberating keyboards, jungle-like percussion and mystical chamber-pop arrangements, Khan's eccentric lair sounds intriguing to visit.

Ian Nathanson/for Metro Canada

Silversun **Pickups**

Album: Swoon
Label: Dangerbird/Universal
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕

THE SILVER-SUN PICKUPS may have been trying a little too hard here. And that's understandable. The critical acclaim garnered by this L.A. foursome's debut CD, Carnavas, must have caught them by surprise. It must be tough waking up, after all, to discover that you're a creative genius. So Swoon lacks the spontaneity and raw edge of Carnavas. That's not to say that the use of a 10-piece orchestra was a bad idea. It actually works on tracks like This is a transitional record, but there's still plenty of brilliance. Brian Aubert offers up new worlds of fuzz guitar. We now need them fully explored.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

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It's no illusion — Blaine getting hitched
David Blaine is planning to marry his French girlfriend, model Alizee Guinochet. The illusionist reportedly confirmed the engagement to New York Post gossip column PageSix over the weekend. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

Obsession gone wrong

Female stalkers always get their due in male-dominated films

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

Movie **feature**

The thriller Obsessed may be best summed-up with the proverb, "hell hath no fury like a woman scorned."

The film — which opens this Friday — stars Ali Larter as an office temp who becomes so enamoured with a co-worker, she sets out to ruin his marriage. As the title implies, it's an infatuation that knows no boundaries.

It's not necessarily a novel idea however. Swimfan, Single White Female, Notes on a Scandal and Vanilla Sky are just some films that explore a similar trend of female-rooted obsession. It seems instead of the traditionally bewitching femme fatale archetype, writers are more frequently devising roles where women become the stalker.

Although the notion of what has been described as the fixated "psycho femme" was introduced in 1971's Play Misty For Me, "When most people think of (1987's) Fatal Attraction, (they think of) the ultimate case of obsession-gone-wrong," says Dominique Mainon.

Co-author of the book Cinema of Obsession, Mainon has studied erotic fixation on film and describes the "female gaze" as influential to the recent gender-flipping trend in movies.

"The female gaze is a quasi-feminist perspective where the woman is trying to enforce her own ideals with men instead of the other way around," says Mainon, noting that while this quasi-feminist dimension may seem empowering at first, the "psycho femme" always gets her due in male-dominated Hollywood.

SUZANNE TENNER

Idris Elba, left, and Ali Larter in a scene from Obsessed.

"For the most part, it's always presented as a dysfunction when you see the woman in charge like that," says Mainon. "She's almost always considered emotionally isolated; she has dysfunctional relationships; she's never, in the end, getting married, going off and having a good life."

"I think everyone gets mixed up between love and possession at one point or another."
Dominique Mainon

While the deviant character may suffer on-screen, theatre owners are hoping the premise of an obsessed woman will at least fill multiplex seats this weekend. After all, as the popularity of past thrillers has dictated, cult audiences do obsess over the archetype of the "psycho femme."

"I think people want to live vicariously through these characters," says Mainon. "This is just a chance to escape and imagine what it would be like. Whether people carry it out or not, I think everyone gets mixed up between love and possession at one point or another."

Jackman lands star on Walk of Fame

HONOUR Hugh Jackman, star of the upcoming X-Men Origins: Wolverine, immortalized his name in Hollywood history on Tuesday by sinking his hand and foot prints into cement outside the famous Grauman's Chinese Theatre.

Jackman recalled a trip to the movie house on Hollywood Boulevard with his wife, saying it was the first Hollywood landmark he visited in Los Angeles, and while there he put his hands into the prints of late comedian Peter Sellers.

"Here we are, 12 years later," he told a crowd at the ceremony.

"It's a very humbling moment as an actor to be here. You look down at the names, from Fred Astaire to Cary Grant, Clint Eastwood, Al Pacino, Steve McQueen, John Wayne, and to think that those people have been immortalized and pretty soon I'll be putting my hands in wet cement." Jackman said, before planting his palms in the concrete. REUTERS

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Baby boy for Scott

R&B singer and actress Jill Scott and her fiancé, drummer Lil John Roberts, have welcomed their first child, a boy, her manager confirms to People. Jett Hamilton Roberts was born at 4:20 p.m. on April 20. He weighed in at 7 lbs., 8 oz. **PEOPLE.COM**

Howard defends film

Director Ron Howard yesterday defended his film adaptation of The Da Vinci Code author Dan Brown's Angels & Demons from criticism that it smears the Roman Catholic Church, heightening an ongoing battle over fictional depictions of the Vatican.

Howard, who also directed the 2006 movie adaptation of The Da Vinci Code, posted a blog at The Huffington Post website saying that neither he nor his new movie Angels & Demons, which debuts in May and stars Tom Hanks, are anti-Catholic.

"And let me be a little controversial: I believe Catholics, including most in the hierarchy of the Church, will enjoy the movie for what it is: An exciting mystery, set in the awe-inspiring beauty of Rome," Howard wrote.

Howard's post came in response to an opinion piece in the New York Daily News by Bill Donahue, president of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, last week. Donahue accused Brown and Howard of "smearing the Catholic Church with fabulously bogus tales."

Last year, the Catholic Church refused to let Angels & Demons be filmed in churches in Rome because of the Vatican's outrage over The Da Vinci Code.

Howard's drama Frost/Nixon was nominated for best picture at the Academy Awards this year, but lost to Slumdog Millionaire. His other films include A Beautiful Mind, which won the best picture Oscar and best directing Oscar for 2001, as well as 1995's Apollo 13.

Brown this week announced that his follow-up novel to The Da Vinci Code will be released in September and is titled The Lost Symbol. **REUTERS**

VITTORIO ZUNINO/GETTY

Actors Tom Hanks and Aleyet Zurer and Director Ron Howard attend the Angels & Demons Photocall held at CERN on Feb. 12 in Geneva, Switzerland.

No jungle series for Blagojevich

REALITY TV A federal judge has shot down former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich's plans for reality-show stardom.

Judge James Zagel said Blagojevich cannot go to Costa Rica to shoot NBC's summer series I'm a Celebrity ... Get Me Out of Here. The former governor had requested the judge loosen his travel restrictions to appear on the show.

"I do not have confidence that things will not go astray if I modify bond conditions," Zagel told a Chicago courtoom, according to reports.

"I do not have confidence that things will not go astray if I modify bond conditions."
Judge James Zagel

Blagojevich said he has turned to the show to help raise money for his legal defense, with estimates putting the potential paycheck at about $100,000.

NBC reacted to the judge's decision with this statement: "NBC is disappointed in the court's decision today regarding Rod Blagojevich's participation on 'I'm a Celebrity ... Get Me Out of Here!' but excited about the casting announcement for the show this Friday. There are no plans to move the show to a location in the United States."

Rod Blagojevich

After being impeached by the Illinois House of Representatives for corruption and misconduct in office and subsequently convicted and removed from office by the State Senate, Blagojevich was indicted April 1 on federal corruption charges.

He pleaded not guilty to 16 criminal counts as part of an alleged effort to sell President Barack Obama's former Senate seat. **REUTERS**

CA	Vu	SC		7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
4/23/09 primetime	267	351	- ACCESS	Alberta Primetime (Live)		America's Next Top Model		Old Christine	Samantha Who	Private Practice (N)		Primetime
	243	317	3 CFCN	etalk	Hollywood	CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		Southland (HDTV) (N)		Grey's Anatomy (N)		News (N)
	-	-	4 OMNI	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons	News		News		The Simpsons	King	Metropia
	-	371	5 KXLY	4 News at 6	4 News at 6:30	Entertainment	The Insider (N)	In Motherhood	Samantha Who	Grey's Anatomy (N)		Practice
	245	306	6 CBRT	NHL Hockey: Conf. Quarterfinal		CBC News	NHL Hockey: Western Conference Quarterfinal Game 4 -- Sharks at Ducks					National
	244	338	7 CICT	ET Canada	Entertainment	(8:01) Harper's Island		Survivor: Tocantins (N)		The Office (N)	Kink in Hair	News Hour
	246	-	8 CKAL	Law & Order: SVU		Hell's Kitchen (N)		In Motherhood	Parks-Recreat	30 Rock	30 Rock	Your City
	119	705	9 CBXFT	Virginie (SC)	Gars fille	Alimentation		Les Galas 2007 du Festival		Le Téléjournal et Les Nou		TJ Alberta
	-	-	10 SHAW	(6) Local Programming						Local Programming		
	-	372	12 KREM	News (N)	Hollywood	The Doctors (N)		Survivor: Tocantins		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		Harper's Island
	-	374	14 KSPS	NewsHour With Jim Lehrer		Educating Spokane		New Tricks		MI-5		Artists Den
	502	390	15 CBC	CBC News: The National		CBC News: The National		CBC News: The National		CBC News: The National		Planet Earth
	-	370	16 KHQ	News	Be-Millionaire	Jeopardy! (N)	Wheel-Fortune	Name Is Earl	Parks-Recreat	The Office (N)	30 Rock	Southland (N)
	-	373	22 KAYU	The Simpsons	Raymond	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Bones (HDTV PA) (N)		Hell's Kitchen (N)		News (N)
	297	652	37 WPIX	Supernatural (HDTV) (N)		PIX News at Ten Tong.		Two/Half Men	Friends	Sex and-City	According-Jim	Frasier
news	500	500	29 CNN	Larry King Live (N)		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)				Larry King Live		Cooper 360
	508	502	31 CNN2	Lou Dobbs Tonight		Nancy Grace		Showbiz Tonight		Lou Dobbs Tonight		Nancy Grace
sports	400	400	21 TSN	NHL Hockey	NHL Hockey	SportsCentre	NBA Basketball: Western Conference First Round Game 3 -- Lakers at Jazz					SportsCentre
	408	418	27 net	MLB Baseball		Sportsnet Con.	MLB Baseball Detroit Tigers at Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim.					Sportsnet Con.
	410	403	30 SCORE	Score Update		Score Tonight		Hardcore Hockey Talk		Final Score	Final Score	Final Score
	411	457	44 OLN	Mantracker		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Departures "Morocco"		Mantracker		Bounty Hunter
	417	406	48 SPEED	Bullrun (HDTV)		Bullrun (HDTV) (N)		Pimp My Ride	Pass Time	Pinks -- All Out (HDTV)		Bullrun (HDTV)
family	552	543	20 YTV	Drake & Josh	iCarly	True Jackson	H2O, Just Add	Malcolm-Mid.	Futurama	In Real Life "E.R."		Falcon Beach
	557	541	39 FAM	Zoey 101	Life Derek	Wizards-Place	Han. Montana	Zack & Cody	Latest Buzz	Wizards-Place	Life Derek	Ned's School
	555	545	67 TOON	Ben 10	Johnny Test	Totally Spies	Total Drama	6TEEN	6TEEN	Futurama	Hellboy: Sword of Storms	
cable variety	575	583	11 CMT	Reba	Reba	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Gone Country		Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Reba
	553	546	17 TREE	Little Bear	Maggie-Beast	Comfy Couch	Zigby	Max & Ruby	Babar	Backyardigans	Dora-Explorer	Go, Diego, Go!
	-	-	18 CHTV	The Insider (N)	E! News	My Fabulous Gay Wedding		Name Is Earl	10 Items-Less	Party Monsters: Cabo		News (N)
	505	398	19 TWN	(5) EarthWatch One		EarthWatch One		EarthWatch Two				
	602	568	23 W	Style by Jury	Style by Jury	Will & Grace	Friends	Divine Design	House	Confidential	Save Us-House	Divine Design
	521	560	24 TLC	American Chopper (N)		Stop Shouting at Me!		American Chopper		Stop Shouting at Me!		Overhaulin'
	603	561	25 FOOD	Chef Jeff Project (N)		Ace of Cakes	Ace of Cakes	Chef Abroad	David Rocco	Unwrapped	Unwrapped	Chef Jeff
	615	520	26 A&E	The First 48 (HDTV) (N)		The Beast (N)		The Beast (HDTV)		The First 48 (HDTV)		The First 48
	617	522	32 SHOW	Wife Swap		The Outer Limits		Love-Death	Love-Death	Trailer Park	Trailer Park	*The Departed*
	601	562	33 SLICE	X-Weighted		X-Weighted		ET Canada	Til Debt-Part	Real Housewives OC		Trading Sp
	-	633	34 ENC2	*Little Women*	(7:20) *Samuel Lount* ★★ (1985), David Fox			*Ride With the Devil* ★★★ (1999, Historical Drama) Skeet Ulrich, Jewel.				
	520	505	35 DISC	Discovery Project Earth		MythBusters		Daily Planet		Deadliest Catch		Global Warm
	620	523	36 BRAVO	*McLuhan's Wake* (2002, Documentary)				Law & Order		Without a Trace		*If These Walls*
	294	650	40 WPCH	Friends	Friends	*The Crow: City of Angels* (1996, Fantasy)			Family Guy	Family Guy	Seinfeld	*Crow: Angels*
	626	547	41 COM	Laughs	Comedy Now	Air Farce	Just for Laughs		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	VIP
	-	539	42 TCM	(6) *Born Yesterday*		*Who's Been Sleeping in My Bed?* ★★★ (1963, Comedy)				*The Long, Long Trailer* (1954, Comedy)		
	628	584	43 SPIKE	TNA Wrestling (HDTV) (N)				MANswers	MANswers	Mocap LLC (N)	GameTrailers	MANswers
	522	516	45 HIST	Go Deep In Istanbul.		NCIS "Lost & Found"		Ancient Discoveries		Go Deep In Istanbul.		NCIS
	627	528	46 SPACE	Ghost Hunters		Chuck (HDTV) (N)		Stargate SG-1		Star Trek: Next Gener.		Trek: Voyager
	-	-	47 AMC	(6) *Passenger 57* (1992)		*All the Right Moves* ★★★ (1983, Drama) Tom Cruise.				*Highlander* ★★ (1986, Fantasy), Roxanne Hart		
	619	525	49 TROP	What Happen?	What Happen?	Vanity Insanity	Inside Hollywood		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Raymond	Family Guy
	600	564	50 HGTV	Disaster DIY	Big Amazing	House Hunters	House Hunters	Holmes in New Orleans		Disaster DIY	Big Amazing	HolmesOrleans
	501	391	52 CTV	CTV Newsnet		News	CTV Newsnet	News	CTV Newsnet	News	CTV Newsnet	News
	504	508	70 BNN	Squeeze Play		Market Call		Headline	Market Call	Commodities	Business News	Squeeze Play
	526	507	92 VIVA	Most Haunted "Hever Castle"		Passion	Homicide File	Psychic Inv.	Encounters	Judging Amy		Most Haunted
	269	350	93 APTN	Warriors: TKO	Wapos Bay	By the Rapids	renegadepress	*Follow the River* ★★ (1995, Adventure) Sheryl Lee.				MYTV
	-	-	94 MCP	(6:30) News	News	Eight Heroes	Mom's-Upset	Vancouver	Kahkashan	Dheeyan Ghar	Sadabahar	Rang Barangi
	571	581	100 MMM	Metal Mania		Entourage	Gene Simmons	The Daily Fix		Metal Mania		Entourage
	570	580	101 MM	Daddy's Girls	Degrassi: TNG	MuchTopTens		Video on Trial	Video on Trial	Daddy's Girls	Degrassi: TNG	Technical Diff.
	581	566	102 MTV	The Hills	The Hills	Taking the Stage (N)		MTV Live	After	The Hills	After Show	Taking, Stage

critics' corner

Born Yesterday
Judy Holliday does her best to perpetuate the "dumb blonde" stereotype in this 1950 comedy. She plays the mistress of an obnoxious tycoon (Broderick Crawford) who fears her cluelessness and lack of refinement will make a bad impression on the congressman he wants to bribe. He hires a newspaperman (William Holden) to tutor her, and they become more than teacher and student. Holliday won the best actress Oscar. 6 PM on TCM

Southland
Art imitates life to some extent, as Tom Sizemore guest stars as a hard-partying actor who has star-struck Dewey wanting to play along instead of booking him, making Chickie (Arija Bareikis) second-guess her decision to be Dewey's partner. 9 PM on CFCN

My Name Is Earl
Earl (Jason Lee) discovers that he has wronged a minister several times, but his attempt to make multiple amends only leaves the man of the cloth struggling to forgive him. Joy (Jaime Pressly) turns to Darnell (Eddie Steeples) for help after she hits Catalina (Nadine Velazquez) with a riding mower. 9 PM on CHTV KHQ

Lollapalooza 2009 lineup announced

MUSIC The 2009 Lollapalooza Festival's 100-plus acts will be led by headliners Depeche Mode, Tool, the Killers, Jane's Addiction, Beastie Boys, and Kings of Leon, promoters announced Tuesday.

Andrew Bird, TV on the Radio, Vampire Weekend, the Decemberists, Neko Case, STS9 (Sound Tribe Sector Nine), Animal Collective, Band of Horses, Of Montreal, Arctic Monkeys, Coheed and Cambria, Ben Folds, Fleet Foxes, Silversun Pickups, Kaiser Chiefs, Crystal Castles and many others are also on the bill.

Project Runway returns in August

TV Fashion reality show Project Runway will make its long-awaited return to TV on Aug. 20 on Lifetime cable channel, Lifetime Television said on Tuesday. The sixth season of the popular reality show was delayed for months by an industry dispute over its move from NBC's Bravo cable outlet. **REUTERS**

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DOGG AFTER DARK (6 ET/PT)
MUCHMOVIE: BATMAN FOREVER (9 ET/PT)
MUCHMUSIC.COM/69ER

LC back at it

One month after 23-year-old Lauren Conrad announced that she was taking a hiatus from her upscale clothing line, the Hills star is launching a brand new apparel line for Kohl's department stores, people.com reports. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity Buzz

Stars defend gay unions

OPINION In light of Miss California slamming gay marriage, Britney Spears and Miley Cyrus have stepped forth to declare that they support gay rights.

"Love is love!" Spears, 27, said on her Twitter page Tuesday. "People should be able to do whatever makes them happy!"

Cyrus, 16, also Twittered to openly gay blogger Perez Hilton (who asked Miss California Carrie Prejean what she thought of same-sex marriage during Sunday's Miss USA competition) after Hilton informed Cyrus of the high suicide rates among gay and lesbian youth. "Jesus loves you AND your partner and wants you to know how much He cares!" Cyrus said. "Like I said, everyone deserves to be happy."

Later, she added, "I am a Christian and I love you — gay or not — BECAUSE you are no different than anyone else! We are all God's children."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Britney to have day in court?

LEGAL Britney Spears is "crying out for help," femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The Circus singer is desperately trying to escape from her controlling father, her former attorney's lawyer told a Los Angeles court on Tuesday.

Jamie Spears — who took legal control of his troubled daughter's personal and professional affairs last year — is trying to obtain permanent restraining orders against the singer's former manager Sam Lutfi, attorney Jon Eardley and lover Adnan Ghalib.

The 27-year-old singer's legal team refutes the claims, calling the men predators who have patently threatened and continually harassed her. Eardley's lawyer Roger Diamond wants Britney to testify in court because he believes her father is holding her prisoner.

The temporary restraining orders against all three men were extended until April 28, when the judge will hear rebuttal arguments before making a final decision. Britney is currently performing in The Circus Starring Britney Spears, her first concert tour in five years.

METRO NEW SERVICES

LiLo's pals worried

PEOPLE More friends are voicing their concern about Lindsay Lohan in the wake of her split from Samantha Ronson, according to Page Six.

A source says the actress is "a complete and utter wreck" and has been partying hard and spending time with "a different man every night."

According to the newspaper, some of those men include 90210 star Kellan Lutz and British photographer Chris Jepson. The friends fear Lohan may be headed for a major meltdown.

METRO WORLD NEWS

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Drinking double standards: Lily

PARTYING After she released her 2006 debut, Lily Allen worried that she might have ended her career prematurely because of her hard-partying ways.

"I took a bit of a beating the first time around. I became more famous for being a train wreck than a singer," she says, according to Exposay.

"Young women are represented in a way that isn't true. If a girl is seen having a drink, she's a drunk. If that happens with a guy, it's not portrayed in the same way."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Never been drunk: Paula

PEOPLE Paula Abdul says she doesn't take prescription drugs — and she's never even been drunk. The American Idol judge hopes to set the record straight in a Nightline interview, which aired on ABC last night.

Asked by Cynthia McFadden about her loopy on-air behaviour and rumours of her taking pills in the past, Abdul says, "Never. I've never been drunk in my life. I don't like it. It's not my thing ...Will not take those drugs. And you can check my medical records — there is nothing like that."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Curvy Jessica hits the gym

PEOPLE Jessica Simpson — who battled scrutiny for her new curves earlier this year — is working out again. And she doesn't like it, people.com reports.

"On my way to workout with my trainer," she wrote on her Twitter page Monday. "Every time we have to do squats, and he yells at me, 'Get lower like you're in the club!'"

Simpson, 27, then adds, "I don't squat in the club unless I am peeing!"

A source tells usmagazine.com Simpson is working with her longtime personal trainer Mike Alexander. Alexander told Fox News last month that the singer wasn't miffed at all the coverage surrounding her fuller figure.

"The whole thing wasn't as traumatic for Jessica as everyone made it out to be," he said. "She's a confident and naturally beautiful girl who works hard."

GETTY IMAGES

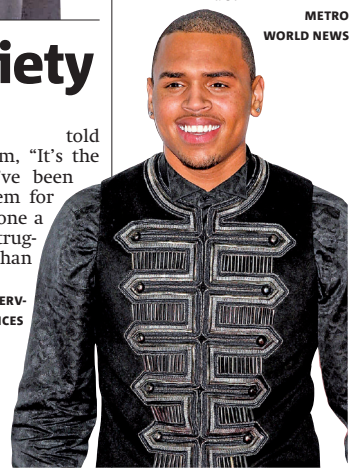
METRO NEWS SERVICES

Mike Tyson's tips for Chris Brown

ADVICE Mike Tyson has Chris Brown figured out. The former heavyweight champ, who was accused of beating girlfriend Robin Givens, was asked what he thought of 19-year-old Brown, who's accused of assaulting his girlfriend, Rihanna.

"My personal opinion about that is, he's just a baby," Tyson tells MTV News. "He's just a little baby that don't know how to handle his emotions when it comes to a woman.

"And he probably hears this and thinks, 'I know how to handle my emotions.' We all think we do."



METRO WORLD NEWS

Hunger strike for Darfur

PROTEST Mia Farrow has announced she'll be starting a hunger strike next week in solidarity with the people of genocide-afflicted Darfur.

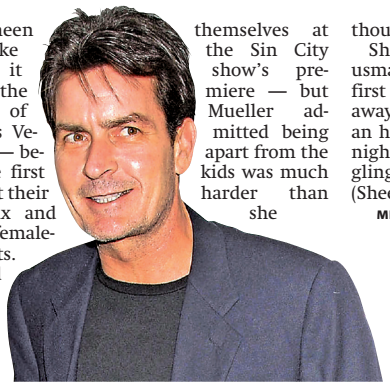
The water-only diet starts Monday and is "a personal expression of outrage at a world that is somehow able to stand by and watch innocent men, women and children needlessly die of starvation, thirst and disease," Farrow says, according to media reports.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Charlie's new father anxiety

KIDS Charlie Sheen and his wife Brooke Mueller found it tough to enjoy the opening night of Peepshow in Las Vegas on Saturday — because it was the first time they had left their twin babies Max and Bob at home, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

Sheen and Mueller left the babies' sides on Saturday to enjoy some time to themselves at the Sin City show's premiere — but Mueller admitted being apart from the kids was much harder than she thought.



She told usmagazine.com, "It's the first time we've been away from them for an hour, let alone a night! I'm struggling more than (Sheen) is."

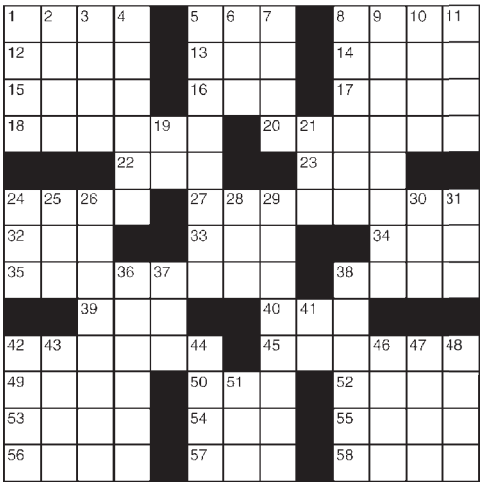
METRO NEWS SERVICES

Today Flurries early. 0 C / -5 C
Friday Broken clouds. 2 C / -7 C
Saturday Mostly cloudy. 9 C / -6 C

BT BREAKFAST TELEVISION

Andrew Schultz, Weather Specialist – Breakfast Television
"I get to spread the word on how your day, evening or weekend will shape up with our ever-changing weather here in Alberta."

Take Five



Crossword across

1 Mid-May honorees
5 Ref
8 Unadulterated
12 Grand story
13 D.C. type
14 Mimicked
15 Crosby, Stills and —
16 Ferrigno or Costello
17 Secondhand
18 Occurring last month
20 With tenderness
22 Vast expanse
23 Nipper's co.
24 Start of something big?
27 Lisa, to Marge
32 Tear
33 Kreskin's claim
34 Ostrich's kin
35 Puzzle
38 Formerly, formerly
39 Whatever amount
40 Hostel
42 "Family Feud" prelim
45 Torrential rainstorm
49 Destroy
50 Sapporo sash
52 Suitor
53 Sean Penn title role
54 Relatives
55 Reply to "Shall we?"
56 Eyelid woe
57 See 24-Across
58 Otherwise

Crossword down

1 Carte
2 October stone
3 Atomizer output
4 Division
5 Transferred files
6 Cattle call?
7 Advertise
8 Potbelly
9 Buffalo resident, e.g.
10 Fishing rod accessory
11 Whirlpool
19 Yours truly
21 Work unit
24 Sphere
25 Compete
26 In the ascendant
28 Enzyme suffix
29 Riot
30 Type squares
31 Same old same-old
36 Bring about
37 Caustic solution
38 Allow to happen
41 007's doctor foe
42 Totals
43 Condo, e.g.
44 Oxen's joiner
46 Boat's bottom
47 Packs away
48 Stratagem
51 Ginormous

Sudoku

For more/less challenging Sudoku puzzles, visit metronews.ca

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

		7	8	9		6		5
4		5	3					9
	9							
8		9			6			
		2				9		
			7			2		1
							1	
3					4	8		6
2		6		1	7	3		

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

8	7	3	4	1	9	5	6	2
4	9	6	2	8	5	1	3	7
1	2	5	3	7	6	8	4	9
7	4	9	5	6	2	3	8	1
5	8	2	1	3	7	4	9	6
3	6	1	8	9	4	7	2	5
9	1	4	7	2	3	6	5	8
6	3	7	9	5	8	2	1	4
2	5	8	6	4	1	9	7	3

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:
Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min.....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Fragrant Lamb with Spinach

INGREDIENTS:
2 tbsp (25 ml) canola oil
2 onions, minced
4 garlic cloves, crushed
2-in. (5-cm) piece fresh ginger, peeled and chopped
1 red chili pepper, seeded, deveined, and sliced
2 tsp (10 ml) paprika
2 tsp (10 ml) ground cumin
2 tsp (10 ml) ground coriander
1 tsp (5 ml) ground white pepper
1/2 tsp (2 ml) cinnamon
Seeds from 8 green cardamom pods, crushed
2 bay leaves
1/2 tsp (2 ml) salt
1/2 cup (125 ml) plain yogurt
1/4 cup (50 ml) sour cream
1 lb (500 g) lean boneless lamb, cubed
2 large tomatoes, chopped
1 bag (10 oz/225 g) fresh baby spinach
4 tbsp (60 ml) chopped fresh cilantro
Fresh cilantro sprigs

METHOD:
1. Heat oil in large pot over medium heat. Add onions, garlic and ginger; sauté, stirring frequently, until onions are golden, 10 minutes.
2. Stir in chili pepper, paprika, cumin, coriander, white pepper, cinnamon, cardamom seeds, bay leaves and salt. Stir briefly over medium heat. Stir yogourt and sour cream together, then stir into pot with 2/3 cup (150 ml) water. Add lamb, mix well and cover pan. Simmer until lamb is tender, about 1 1/4 hours.
3. Add tomatoes, spinach and cilantro. Cook, stirring, until tomatoes are soft and spinach wilts, 2 minutes. Taste for seasoning and remove bay leaf. Serve garnished with fresh cilantro.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to rd.ca or check out Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Deal with health issues one at a time. Jealousy makes you laugh. Count your blessings in an unbelievable situation.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
A lazy person reveals deep-seated greed. Play it safe by speaking out. Limit your involvement with a sneaky old friend.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Be bold to defeat bashfulness. Trust affection to win over a friend. Say goodbye to a painful past.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
Pardon an annoying coward who left a mess. An insulting accusation creates anxiety. An astounding dream leads you to good fortune.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
A problem will be solved if you play it cool. Defenses cause your fight-or-flight mechanism to engage. Don't let a bad phone call ruin communication.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Try to hide some slobby personal habits. Unexpected demands widen your perspective. Change your tactics when mercy is shown.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
A victory will be a vindication. A perplexing situation arises at the last minute. Maintain your silence about trashy treasures.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
Reorganizing causes wonderful changes. Help a friend to take it easy. You can nurture hope for a sweetheart.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
A sentimental person exposes a new passion to you. Don't judge someone who lives in despair. Shake off your qualms by learning the facts.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
Gambling causes a breach in a weak relationship. A shameless person is enthusiastic. There's a pointless argument over a ridiculous rule.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
You won't want to heed any cries for help. An oddball gets ignored in public. A judgmental woman ridicules signs of growing older.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
A youngster wants you to take charge. The odds can be beaten. An entertaining adventurer attracts attention.

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*Small coffee only. Limit one per customer, per visit. Not available with any Extra Value Meal or value picks® offer. †Opening hours vary by restaurant. Until 11am on weekends. ©2009 McDonald's.

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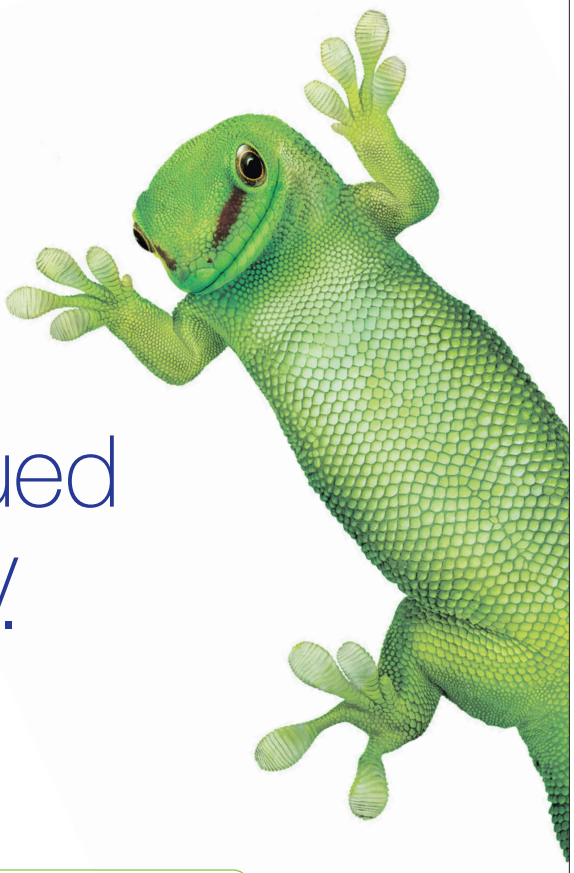

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